

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About . . . Should Christians Protest - Part 1

Everyone has heard about various protest movements. Recent examples include: the feminist movements, Black Lives Matter, abortion activists, and teachers protesting for more pay, just to mention but a few. While some protests are peaceful, others often result in violence brought on by political activism. Protesters are drawn from all walks of life and are united in pursuing a common objective as defined by the protest in which they are engaged.

Often the protests are started by blatant disregard for God's word. Homosexuals want their "rights." According to God's word there are no "rights" for homosexuals because Paul said that homosexuality is wicked (Romans 1:21, 26-27). Because of homosexuality Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God (Gen. 19:1-11). Abortion activists protest to have the right to kill babies in the womb (Psm. 139:13-16; Luke 1:41,44; Ex. 20:13). When it comes to Black Lives Matter and feminist movements, God considers all people equal in His eyes. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Each of us at some time have wanted to actively engage in a protest of some form due to a general dissatisfaction with a particular condition in our life. Some protesters have discontent and grumble about the conditions in which they live or work, and the wages they earn. There is a feeling that we all need to have the right to make our individual views known to everyone else. How should a disciple of Jesus Christ react to situations in the world which they are not happy with? Should Christians take part in the causes or protests that seem to reflect how we believe? In order to answer these questions we need to know what the word of God says about these matters and the example the apostles gave to us in the first century.

Social circumstances were not ideal in the first century. There was great persecution from the Roman Empire toward Christians. Paul wrote, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" (1 Tim. 2:3-4). Though there was governmental persecution Paul urged, "that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Tim. 2:1-2). So as Christians we should petition God through prayer rather than protest as though man might have a solution to our problems. Paul clearly understood the revelation that God had given to him. "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinances of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves" (Rom. 13:1-2). What these verses do not say is, "if they [governing authorities] are perfect," or if you voted for them, we will be subject to them.

When Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate [Roman Governor], he told Jesus he had the power of life or death over Him, but Jesus corrected Pilate by telling him, "You would have no authority over me, unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11). The sovereignty of God is evident in this verse. Those who are in power, even those who are less than perfect, are there because God has appointed them. There is nothing in the Bible about attacking politicians, slandering their names, or insulting someone who voted differently than we did. Jesus said to, "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). All Christians should use their freedom to support, or vote, for those candidates that will respect the principles of God's word. We must understand that it is God who places in office whom He pleases, and sometimes God allows evil rulers to be in place as part of His judgment on nations.

Next week we will discuss if Jesus was an activist or a revolutionary. Did He form a group content on bringing about political or social change by pressuring others? Also, what examples do we have from His disciples as to the methods Christians use to heal societies differences.

Send comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:

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