

## Pastor's Ramblings - October 2012

*"...Sell, everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven. Then come, follow me.: -- Luke 18:22b*

I was asked recently who I thought Jesus would vote for in the upcoming Presidential election. My response was: None of the above! Now, it is not because I am not going to vote or that I am still considering who I am going to vote for. One reason was because voting was a concept that was almost unknown in Jesus' day. Israel was under the rule of Rome. Rome did not have elections (at least not as we would think of them). Kings and emperors ruled. Rules were made, you obeyed...was not Jesus born in Bethlehem because of a decree by a Roman Emperor? I am convinced there will be no elections in heaven!

But the main reason I replied as I did is because I am not sure that God and government are compatible. At least in our present day political systems. Luke shares the story of a rich ruler coming to Jesus. He has a question, What must he do to inherit eternal life? What laws must he keep? What are the ones that cannot be broken? He is concerned how he can handle his affairs, his money and still gain access to heaven. He has been a good boy. He has kept the important laws. But, he is out for what he can get - bigger and better barns - larger and more elaborate houses, bigger yachts, and vacation homes.

Jesus says, he lacks one thing - a concern for the poor. He has failed to see those in need around him. Things have taken over his life. He is more concerned about earthly appearances than his neighbors. He is concerned about his image. His wealth. He is what we would call a "rugged individual". A man-made man. He thinks his wealth is a statement about his faith - God blessings. Jesus confronts him and his wrong theology and he is not ready for it. Luke states, *"When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth"* (18:23). Apparently Jesus did not convince him to sell his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor. He was not concerned with the poor. He was not that ready for heaven!

Someone has figured out that the money spent electing a president this year would nearly pay the salary of every school teacher in America and give them raises in the process. Is there not something wrong with a society that will spend more electing a president than teaching school children? Is there not something wrong with a society that tolerates such spending while many of its people go hungry and homeless? Is there not something wrong when unknown billions are given - and people try to convince us that nothing is wanted in return? Is there not something wrong with a church that stands silent while this is happening?

The questions we should be asking: Who is willing to stand for the poor? Who is willing to work towards a just justice system? Who is willing to stand as Jesus stood: For those who have no voice? For those who have no resources to get a voice? For those who have served and now are living on the streets because of stress of that service? Not who will benefit me - but who will stand for the benefit of others? Prayerfully vote!

### *Sermons for October 2012*

#### **October 7, World Wide Communion**

Job 2:1-10; Mark 10:13-16

*Childlike Faith*

#### **October 21**

Job 38:1-11; Mark 10:35-45

*Asking the Wrong Questions*

#### **October 14**

Amos 5:10-15; Mark 10:17-31

*Oh, That I Knew...*

#### **October 28**

Job 42:1-17; Mark 10:46-52

*Have Mercy*