

unchristian

SERMON STARTER

www.unchristian.com

WEEK 3

TOO POLITICAL AND SHELTERED

The following suggestions are given to help you begin your preparation. Of course, your own personal stories, illustrations, and application to your context are vital.

Bottom Line of Message: When our posture becomes too closely associated with a political party, we lose credibility.

INTRODUCTION

- Open with an illustration about how dangerous it is to talk about faith and politics together.
- The reason we're going to talk about faith and politics is because one of the greatest perceptions of Christianity is that Christians are too political. And more often than not, Christians are associated with right-wing politics.
- Maybe you don't think this is an issue, because you yourself support right-wing politics.
- But, this is becoming a bigger and bigger issue among younger generations for several reasons (highlight reasons given on pp. 163-165, unChristian).
- Another top perception of Christianity is that Christians are sheltered, old-fashioned, unintelligent, and out-of-touch with reality. Often, this is related to politics because Christians fight for values that many outsiders think are old-fashioned or out of touch with reality.
- All of this raises a question: is it a bad thing to be too political or too sheltered in the eyes of outsiders?

BIBLICAL TEXTS

- We're not going to look at just one specific biblical text this week, but consider a few things we need to learn.
 - The Bible doesn't ignore politics and neither should we (e.g., explain Jesus' instructions about paying taxes to Caesar or Paul' teaching about submitting to authorities and praying for political leaders).
 - But, neither political party in America today speaks for God; he is not a Republican or Democrat.
 - When our values become too closely associated with one political party, platform, or candidate, we become spokespeople for that party/platform/candidate rather than for God. And we lose our ability to be a prophetic witness for God's kingdom, which is not of this world.
 - When we become more know for what we are against (either a Republican or Democratic agenda), we are perceived as sheltered, ignorant, and close-minded.

CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

- How do we change the perception without ignoring our convictions?
- Be thoughtful. Political issues are very complex and rarely does one party or candidate present the "biblical" viewpoint. We must educate ourselves on the issues and demonstrate that Christians want to approach issues with both values and solutions in mind.
- Be respectful. When we disagree, we must demonstrate respect. Genuine, godly believers will often come to different conclusions on political issues and this should foster humility regarding our own positions. And we must remember that our value system is different than those who are not Christians. Our posture toward those with whom we disagree is often as important as the content of the debate itself.
- Be engaging. Don't be afraid to engage, but offer solutions rather than just highlighting problems. And then do something. We will be far more successful at bringing transformation to any issue by engaging the issue ourselves—in our local communities and churches—rather than believing that the election of a political candidate or the passing of a particular piece of legislation will solve the problem.