

Editorial: How we should respond to this election

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Donald Trump has won the 2024 U.S. presidential election. How should Christians respond to that?

Based on my social media feed and phone conversations on this day after the election, the answer is obvious. “We should rejoice,” some say. “We should mourn,” say others. Still others are conveying a different response, one I hope to communicate here.

Those who take [Paul’s instruction](#) seriously to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep will be busy—and exhausted—following yesterday’s election. But the occasion calls for a deeper and more prolonged response than rejoicing or weeping.

We need to remember two things: Our government is not our hope, and all people are to be treated as bearers of God’s image.

Out of these two things, we need to pray, seek the welfare of our society, care for *all* the vulnerable, worship the Lord and communicate Jesus’ good news.

Ground hope in Christ.

So much hope was pinned on the 2024 election. Among other hopes, so many saw the outcome as decisive for the future of our democracy. Maybe it was or will be, but such hope is too easily misplaced in politicians and policies.

One important response to this election is for us to be clear-eyed and

single-minded about where we are to place our hope.

Christian, we are to place our hope squarely in Jesus Christ, who made all things and in whom all things hold together. He—not any politician or policy—is to have “[first place in everything](#).”

Jesus Christ is the ultimate subject and object of hope, because he is hope’s source and fulfillment. Politicians and policies are [like grass](#)—here today and gone tomorrow.

Obey the greatest law.

How we as Christians are to conduct ourselves in light of the election isn’t determined by who won it. Our conduct is governed by [a greater and higher law](#). We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Loving God wholly and with our whole selves involves the way we regard and treat other people—*all* other people. If we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, we must fix in our minds that each of us is created in God’s image, and to disparage God’s image is not merely an affront to a person but is contempt for God.

Pray for others.

Sometimes it’s difficult to appreciate the image of God in another person, especially if that other person believes, behaves, looks and acts differently than us. Asking God to do for them what we want God to do for us—praying *for* them—can change our view of them.

That other person for whom we pray may be the current president or the president-elect, as Joshua Longmire encourages in [his Voices article](#) published this week.

Praying for the president isn't just a nice thing to do, nor is it meant to be patriotic. As Longmire reminds us, praying for the president is consistent with the scriptural exhortation—again from Paul—to make “petitions, prayers, intercession ... for all people—for kings and those in authority” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Work for society's welfare.

While we do not have an earthly king, we do elect people to positions of authority. Our prayers for them, while possibly changing our view of them, also may lead to “the welfare of the city.” “Pray to the LORD on its behalf,” Jeremiah said, “for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7).

The above verse is not a universal command, but is a more specific instruction to the Hebrews who were taken into exile in Babylon. Even so, it exhibits a principle found elsewhere in Scripture of God's expectation that God's people will work for the well-being of others.

Ours is a divided society in which people are convinced others are working against their well-being. What an opportunity for God's people to demonstrate *God's* goodness by seeking the good of others.

Care for all the vulnerable.

Scripture is replete with commands to care for and look after the needy, orphans and widows; to welcome foreigners and give them shelter; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and free the oppressed. Every part of Scripture—the Law, the historical books, the wisdom literature, the prophets, the Gospels, the letters—every part communicates this expectation of God.

So, whoever holds office, whatever party holds sway, our job, Christian, is to do as God expects.

Jesus said the vulnerable and needy would always be with us. Some try to say that means our efforts to care for them won't change anything. I say, "Tell that to Jesus," who made clear what difference it makes. You can [read it here](#).

Worship the Lord.

Whether we celebrate or mourn the outcome of this election, neither response must take the place or stand beside the glory due only to the Lord our God—not to politicians, policies or parties.

The fear, anger, resentment, bitterness, suspicion and cynicism so prevalent among us these last several years are evidence of misappropriated worship. We have allowed things of this world to bend our knees. By contrast, when we worship the Lord alone, joy, love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control will be evident.

Christian, we must worship the Lord, not because of who won or lost an election, or whether there was an election at all. We must give the Lord our heart, mind, soul and strength—our all and our very best—because: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise" (Revelation 5:12).

His name is above every name, and at his name "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

Communicate Jesus' good news.

Politicians can do only so much. [Jesus](#), on the other hand, “was with God in the beginning” and “through him all things were made.” He is “the beginning and the end.” He “became flesh,” lived among us and laid down his life, so “whoever believes in him will not perish but will have eternal life.” In him, our pardon is purchased, our sins are forgiven, our eternal life is secure.

Christian, we are the ones who, in believing this good news, have identified with Jesus in his death, burial and resurrection, and are to lay down our lives in imitation of him—and no one else—to proclaim his good news so others might follow him.

This is how we are to respond to this and any election.

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