

2nd Opinion: Vote with 'childlike naievete'

November 2, 2012

On Nov. 6, tens of millions of United States citizens will go to prescribed polling places and vote in a national election that, among other things, will determine who the president will be for the next four years. I've heard this election is the most crucial in the history of presidential elections. Interesting. I heard that four years ago. I heard it eight, 12, 16, etc. years ago, too. I'm sure it will be heard in 2016.

I'm not diminishing the importance of a presidential election. The person who sits in the Oval Office is, arguably, the most powerful person in the world. I simply tire of tactics that result in worrisome fear—the most crucial election in history.

Many folks, like my mother, will not vote. No person is preventing her from voting. She's almost 92 years old, confined to a nursing home, has no concept of the "issues" and really hasn't given much thought to who the next president will be.

I try to talk to my mother each Sunday evening. Sometimes, she is lucid, and our conversations will last for awhile. She's had a good day. Most of the time, though, our conversations are less than a minute. Her day has not been good, for whatever reason.

A few weeks ago, as she and I were talking, she was having one of those "good days." I said something about the election and asked if she were worried about who would be the next president. She responded: "No. Should I be?" When she said that, I felt a smile spreading across my face, and I said, "No, you shouldn't be worried." The course of the conversation

then changed to the weather; my wife, Jackie; and the children.

She's not worried about the outcome of an election. I'm not sure what ✘ she's worried about—if anything—as her life's journey is nearing its end. She may live to be 100 or more, of course. But she is on the final leg of her earthly voyage.

When I visit her in western Kentucky, I often look at her, wishing I could just overhear a few of the conversations in her mind. What is she really thinking? You've had those mo-ments, too.

While I "worry" about my mom, I'm not "consumed" with worry. She has her worries, I'm certain. But she's not worried about who wins the election.

Maybe we shouldn't be worried, either. I'm beginning to think my mother's childlike naiveté is what all us us need in our nation. If I am not mistaken, there are at least six people who are running for president. I don't know if all six will appear on ballots in every state. I can't help but wonder if any of the six embody my mother's childlike naiveté. I wonder if any embody just plain childlikeness. Do any of us? I'm not sure I do.

We don't have to be worried. Yes, that is easier said than done. But we really don't. Worry is indicative of faithlessness. Our faith is not in a political party or a candidate. Our faith is in God the Father Almighty, who is revealed perfectly in Jesus Christ. When our faith is rooted in him, worry will begin to dissipate. We may never be completely worry-free because of sin. but we will worry less.

I invite you to vote with a childlike naiveté. Give thanks for the privilege to cast a vote—even a losing one. After the results are in and if your candidate or mine loses, don't worry. Remember, your life is not in the hands of a candidate. It is in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus, who says, "Don't worry about who will be elected."

My mother believes that. You and I can, too.

-Jimmy Gentry is pastor of [Tabernacle Baptist Church in Carrollton, Ga.](#)