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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

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**Let Love, Knowledge, and Discernment Guide Your Vote**

**Selected Scriptures**

**Prayer:** *Father, we just again, we thank you for your grace, we thank you for your goodness, we thank you for the ultimate sacrifice that you made in order to enable us to have a relationship with you. Father, we praise you and thank you for that gift and we thank you for the gift of your church. We thank you for the ability to gather together as we have. We just continue to pray that as we do, as we open up your word, as we look into this particularly difficult subject, we pray that you would give the presence of your Holy Spirit, that you would give your wisdom and not ours and that you would be again, be pleased with what takes place and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, last week we started a new series on the book of Philippians and if you remember last week Paul's letter to the Philippians, it starts out with him talking about his joyful prayer that he has for the Philippian church. He says: *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy.* Well this morning we're going to take a look

at the opening of that prayer and why it gave Paul joy. You see a good part of Paul's joy was seeing how the Philippians represented the ongoing work of the grace of God. Paul said: *And I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* See Paul saw that good work displayed in the Philippians who were ministering to him while he was in prison. He said: *It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.*

The Philippian church was firing on all cylinders as a church. I mean they actively defended the gospel to outsiders, they confirmed it to those who were inside the church, not only did they work inwardly but they also demonstrated the love of Christ outwardly by ministering to Paul while he was in a prison cell. *Philippians 1:8* says: *For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.* Well, what's Paul's number one desire in praying for the Philippians, it's right there in verse 9, it says: *It is my prayer that your*

love may abound more and more. But it's not just love that Paul wants to abound. It is a qualified love. He says: *That your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent.* This love is a love full of knowledge and discernment and excellent, it is one that is pure and blameless, it is filled with the fruit of righteousness that can only come through Jesus Christ. And when it does come through Jesus Christ, it does precisely what it was intended to do, it glorifies and praises God. Paul's highest desire is for the church to have love itself. But he also recognizes that love by itself, if it's not bounded by other qualities can be disastrous. The Corinthian church was a perfect example of that. They were very big on love but not very big on discernment and knowledge, so much so that Paul wrote this to them in *1 Corinthians 5: It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles -- that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.* What Paul's saying here is that as bad as this sin was, he was even more concerned over the fact that the church treated it as not that big a deal. They had love without knowledge. They had love without discernment. And because they lacked that discernment they refused to mourn what was clearly a moral outrage. I wish I could say that that was an isolated incident but according to

scripture this is not only not a one off incident, it is really the revealing pattern that occurs over and over again in scripture. I mean God's word is the source for us of knowledge and discernment, and yet we human beings have a tendency to ignore at our peril the most basic and critical way to go about living our lives. I mean it's out found in *Proverbs 3:5* which says: *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

You see when people abandon the word of God in this *Proverbs 3:5* approach of not trusting in your own understanding, bad things happen just like they're happening today. Listen to the words that God spoke to the prophet Hosea and understand how apropos these words are for us today. This is *Hosea 4:1*. It says: *Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land. God says the specific reason for the faithlessness and the lovelessness is there's no knowledge of God in the land. When that happens the text goes on to say this: There is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, and even the fish of the sea are taken*

away. Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest. You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. God says it's the lack of knowledge that ends up destroying a people and guess what, he holds the religious leaders responsible.

Almost two centuries later Jeremiah stated another of God's indictment of his people. This is *Jeremiah 11*. God says: *For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, "Obey My voice." Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done.'*" You see when the knowledge of God is ignored, what happens? People begin to follow the dictates of their own evil hearts. The Philippian church had resisted that temptation. That's why Paul said *it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and with discernment*. That word "knowledge" that Paul speaks of, that he insists to be bound by is the Greek word

"epignosis" and it's related to the word gnosis which you've all heard many, many times, the Greek word for "knowledge." It was the Gnostics who were constantly claiming they had this secret hidden knowledge, but gnosis itself is simply a reference to knowledge. "Epignosis" refers to the precise and correct knowledge having to do with God himself, and the only place you can find it is in scripture itself. See it's not enough to simply be well-intentioned in your pursuit of knowledge. Listen to what Paul says to his fellow Jews in *Romans 10*. He says: *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* Paul acknowledges, says brothers, they have zeal but it wasn't grounded in God's word. Again there's a failure to adhere to that Proverbs 3:5 warning to *lean not on your own understanding.* So Paul goes on to say: *For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.* God is pointing out that there are two different directions that his people go in. You either let your faith dictate your response to circumstance or you will let circumstance dictate your response to faith. God says there's a default in the way that we human beings think and it is directly a result of the fall. We constantly seek out our own understanding instead of God's, and that's why Proverbs 3:5 is so critical because God tells us specifically don't do that because

bad things will happen. Again he says: *Trust in the LORD with all of your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.* That's not just a nice idea, it's the only way to avoid spiritual disasters. God says we are predisposed to lean on our own understanding and when we do that, we ignore the fact that our hearts are diametrically opposed to God's way. Paul himself said in *Romans 7: For I do not do the good that I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on going.* I mean that evil is the legacy that we've inherited from Adam. It sets our default position against the will of God. We call it "the old man," we call it "the old nature." And from the moment that we become believers, we are locked in a war with that old man, with that old nature but it's a war that we often forgot that we are in. And we forgot that the spiritual mindset against God is not part of our conscious thinking. It was not like we believers say, oh, today I'm going to defy God. We don't do that. And when we make decisions without consciously relegating the decision making process to scripture itself as the revealed will of God, we wind up just like the folks of Hosea in Jeremiah's day. We think that we are thinking like God would think while we are thinking wrongly. Claiming to be wise, we become fools. And it's because we refuse to trust God and trust ourselves instead in trusting in that one area that is hopelessly compromised by our fallen human natures and that's our understanding.

The reason why God says lean not on your own understanding is because our understanding quite frankly stinks. It not only starts out crippled and broken but it inevitably descends to lower and lower levels based on the principle that Jesus made quite clear in *Matthew 13*. Listen to what he said. He said: *For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*

Understand, Jesus made that statement with regard to what he described as the secrets of the kingdom of God. He made it quite clear that the more truth that you reject, the less capable you are of receiving additional truth. And there's only one place in which the secret of the kingdom of God are located today and it's not the *New York Times*, it's not *CBS* or *NBC* or *ABC* or even *Fox News*. It's the word of God. Paul commended the Philippian church because they had demonstrated a love of Christ that was bound, it was bound by knowledge and discernment. As we approach this upcoming election, there has never been a time when we needed it more. God says don't trust your own understanding but trust me and my word and we are right in the middle of demonstrating what happens when that instruction is ignored.

This is a political season. I mean we can't ignore the fact that politics is on the minds of everyone. And just as Paul insisted that love be tempered with knowledge and discernment, we too need



to have that same spirit of discernment as we try to sort out how we are going to respond as believers to our responsibility as citizens to a representative form of government. I believe we all have an obligation to vote. I say that not based on my own understanding but what I believe God says in his word. See, God expects us as kingdom citizens to exercise wisdom and discernment even when it comes to our political responsibilities. I mean if we were living in North Korea, if we were living in China, God would have very, very different expectations of us, but we don't live there, we live here and we have a responsibility here.

You know in Jesus day there was no such thing as politics, per se. There was only kings and kingdoms. Individuals had no say whatsoever in what kind of government they had. In a representative republic such as we have, there are approximately 250 million people who are eligible to vote. That means that God has given to each one of us individually one-250 millionth of the responsibility for the government that we have. I mean that may seem like a tiny fraction but it also means nonetheless that every one of us has that responsibility, tiny as it may be. It's a responsibility not unlike one that Moses gave to his people when he said in *Deuteronomy 1:13*: *'Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads.'* We have the right responsibility to do just that and God

insists that he himself is woven into that very process. He says in *Romans 13*: *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.* And because we've been uniquely gifted by God with a representative form of government, I believe we have an obligation to participate in it and participate in it wisely. And that means, just like Paul says, tempering any emotion we might have with the knowledge and discernment that Paul calls for in the *Philippian church*.

Now, you know, you might wonder why this type of discernment is being presented within the context of politics. Here's why. You see for many, many years, it really wasn't the business of church to get heavily involved in politics because politics largely stayed out of the realm of personal morality. Democrats saw their role as sticking up for the little guy and Republicans saw their role as helping the economy by helping out businesses. You could basically choose between two different approaches to good governance, but all that has changed. That's not the way that it is today. Years ago there was a moral consensus in this country about what was right and what was wrong. It didn't matter if you were Republican or Democrat fifty years ago, you understood that abortion was wrong, that marriage was between a man and a woman and that God made you either a man or a woman. That moral consensus is gone. And more

and more politics is now about the way you -- not about the way you allocate resources and defend the country, it's about moral issues that are now being written into law with devastating moral consequences. That means being able to discern which politician's platforms and goals more closely resemble the goals and aspirations that God has for us in scripture becomes an existential spiritual exercise rather than just a simple political decision. I think it goes without saying for many the choices here is incredibly complicated. I mean you have a choice between choosing a party headed by a man with serious moral shortcomings or a party determined to defy God directly in what he has clearly commanded in scripture. Because this is a political season, there's rank obfuscation on both side because both want to use God and scripture for their own political advantage. As a result we find ourselves in the situation where there are Christians on both sides who are touting the very same issues. I find it incredible that people who say if you vote for Trump, you're just not a Christian. I have find it incredible people who say if you vote for Biden, you're not a Christian. I think it's out of place to make those kind of pronouncements. I can tell you right off the bat it is not our place to make a determination of who is and who isn't a Christian. That's reserved for God and God alone. And when Jesus said: *"Judge not, lest ye be judged,"* he wasn't ruling out having the wisdom of discernment, he was precluding anybody making a final

judgment on anybody else. God alone has the right to say who is and isn't a Christian, and I shudder to think of people claiming that right for themselves. I believe you can make all kinds of errors and judgments and maybe even sinfully fall short in making a political judgment, but I certainly would never gauge someone's faith on the basis of their political decisions even though there's no shortage of people claiming to be Christians who are making decisions that I believe are absolutely contrary to the word of God.

And that being said, I think we can look at the state of politics today and discern just what happens when people show the wisdom -- or eschew, I should say, the wisdom and discernment of God's word and rely instead on their own understanding. Paul said the Philippian church was to be commended because they expressed their love with knowledge based on discernment. That knowledge comes from scripture alone. And so this morning I want to look at scripture for our knowledge and discernment of what God's will is for us in this political season. And there's three different areas of the kingdom of God that are now under attack that all have to do with God's order in creation. And it's my contention that while one of our candidates has a checkered past and a questionable presence when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit, our other candidate stands directly opposed to God in three critical areas

with regard to gender and marriage and life itself. And it's in those areas of direct rebellion that I believe have to influence the way we decide to vote.

So first I want to look at gender because I believe this goes to the very heart of God's design for mankind, and it is here that the divide between our own understanding of God's word and the world's understanding becomes readily apparent. You see, from the very beginning in the book of Genesis God made it clear that there are but two genders. *Genesis 1:26* says: *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."* So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Vice President Biden supports the idea that gender is not fixed by God, that it is instead fluid and transformable. According to the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood whose board includes folks whose biblical acumen I greatly respect, folks like Al Mohler, Wayne Grudem and John Piper, Ligon Duncan, they put out just a fact sheet about different candidates. This is what they said about Mr. Biden with regard to gender. They say:

"Today, Joe Biden is running for president on a platform committed

to advancing LGBT rights. The centerpiece of his publicly released plan is the passage of the Equality Act. In fact, according to his campaign, enacting the Equality Act is the 'top legislative priority' for Biden's first 100 days. Notably, the Equality Act would codify sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in U.S. civil rights law, thereby granting them the same status as race and national origin. If Republicans maintain control of the U.S. Senate, the Equality Act has little chance of passing Congress. However, Biden's LGBTQ+ plan promises several executive actions that would circumvent the legislative process and go into effect immediately. For example, Biden has promised to reinstate Obama-era guidance to 'restore transgender students' access to sports, bathrooms, and locker rooms in accordance with their gender identity' on his first day in office. Biden has also committed to reverting to the Obama administration's interpretation of Title VII, and 'reaffirm that the Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.' Additionally, Biden will instruct the State Department to allow people who identify as transgender or non-binary to use 'preferred pronouns' on government identifications, passports, and other documentation."

Now the council also had this to say about President Trump. They said: "However, despite past ambivalence toward subjects of great

concern to conservative Christians, President Trump's administration has repeatedly prioritized life, family, and religious liberty issues. While some have questioned the administration's motives, many of these decisions cannot be attributed to political expediency. The administration has expended political capital to repeal Obama-era directives dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity and has taken proactive steps to defend those who hold to a biblical sexual ethic. In addition, the administration has implemented an originalist interpretation of the Constitution, which does not read social policy preferences into the law but allows for an interpretation of the plain text to arrive at legal conclusions. Many of the administration's policy changes flow from this interpretation."

Again speaking of other action, the council said: "Although not comprehensive, these actions are representative of the Trump administration's policies related to gender and human sexuality. True, there are additional actions the president's team could take. For example, President Trump has not rescinded President Obama's executive order that elevated sexual orientation and gender identity to the status of protected classes for the employment of federal contractors, and several federal agencies have Obama-era policies on this issue still on the books."

The article concludes by saying: "The worldview underlying a significant portion of the president's policies in this area -- whether driven by an originalist legal framework or other policy concerns -- are, for the most part, aligned with a biblical sexual ethic."

*Genesis 1:27 says: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Again, you either let your faith dictate your response to circumstances or you will let circumstance dictate your response to faith. In this case Mr. Biden's faith has been circumvented by his desire to appeal to the transgender community at the expense of God's clear directives in scripture itself. I just want to get you to understand what we're trying to do here. We're trying to work against making emotional decisions like the Corinthian church frequently made to be able to arrive at a decision based on the knowledge of scripture itself because that's what needs to be driving our decision to vote.

And the second area that we want to look in is a second critical area is the area of marriage. Vice President Biden demands the right for men to marry men and women to marry women. And if he had decided to trust in the Lord not on his own understanding, Mr. Biden could have heard the words of Jesus himself who was



crystally clear when he was pressed on the issue of marriage. This is *Matthew 19*. It says: *The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them -- again, these are Jesus' words -- "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,' -- there's the gender -- and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?* So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

So where does Mr. Biden stand on this? Vice President Biden's past history and his present position on marriage is laid out well in this glowing article that was out just this past June. It was written in the *New York Times* by Adam Nagourney and Thomas Kaplan. This is what they said, and these are very pro Biden folks. They said:

"Joseph R. Biden Jr. voted for the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, blocking federal recognition of same-sex marriages. Two years earlier, he voted to cut off federal funds to schools that teach the acceptance of homosexuality. In 1973, Mr. Biden, in an off-handed response to a question, wondered if homosexuals in the military or government were potential security risks. But today,

Mr. Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee for president, has so completely identified himself with positions embraced by L.G.B.T.Q. leaders that his history on gay rights has faded into the mist. If he is elected president, said Chad Griffin, a political consultant and longtime gay rights leader, Mr. Biden, the former vice president, will be the 'most pro-equality president we have ever had.' Mr. Biden's evolution was on vivid display last week as he celebrated the Supreme Court decision protecting L.G.B.T.Q. workers from job discrimination. So were his differences with President Trump, who barely acknowledged the ruling, and the Republican National Committee, which is holding over the party platform from 2016 that still opposes same-sex marriage and supports so-called conversion therapy for L.G.B.T.Q. youth. Mr. Biden's shifting views over the course of his political career illustrate the extent to which the Democratic Party has changed as it sought to keep pace with Americans, especially younger ones, who have dismissed traditional stances on issues like same-sex marriage. Mr. Biden has managed to not only keep pace with these evolving views, but on same-sex marriage, he was a step ahead of many of his fellow Democrats."

And again there's a number of issues that need to be addressed here. Number one, if two men or two women decide to live together, there's part of me that says actually for compassion sake, I'm not

in favor of denying them inheritance rights or life insurance or the ability to visit somebody who's sick and dying. If that's their decision, I mean, if they want a legal civil partnering agreement, I wouldn't object to that. What I do object to is that in all of this is the desire to take something that God alone ordained at the very beginning of creation itself such as marriage and turn it into something that God never intended it to be. God's intention for marriage was stated quite clearly by Jesus: 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.' There's a huge difference between wanting a legalized life partnership and demanding that something as sacred and as God ordained as marriage be pressed into a mold that God never intended. In terms of compassion, in terms of wanting to extend equality to as many people as possible, folks who claim to be Christians have clearly abandoned their trust in the Lord in this instance and instead are relying on their own understanding. See, you either let your faith dictate your response to circumstances or you're going to let circumstance dictate your response to faith. I believe in this instance Mr. Biden has let circumstance dictate his faith.

And if God's word is emphatic when it comes to marriage and gender, it is explicit when it comes to life itself. President Trump whether out of political expediency or general change of heart, I

have no idea, has gone from being historically pro-choice to now fully embracing a pro-life platform. He's made that crystally clear over and over again in the Republican party's platform position and in his many public statements that he's made during his campaign. But once again we find one political party, the Democratic party, and one candidate here, Vice President Biden, who is actively defying God directly when it comes to the issue of life. God has said for lack of knowledge my people perish, and whether it's an act of suppression of truth or a willful or non willful ignorance, only God knows, but what we do know though is that God's will as expressed in scripture when it comes to life in the womb has been trampled underfoot. In fact the very issue of abortion today is being reframed today as a morally righteous choice. We saw that on display in the supreme court hearings this past week. Just about every one of those who were opposed to the confirmation of Amy Barrett considers themselves to be Christians, and they may well be, I can't say. But these are folks who feel very much at ease attacking Amy Barrett because she is pro-life because they have made up their mind that being pro-life is in itself a bad thing. They consider it to be an attack on women's autonomy. And they made the decision that as Christians they need to attack it.

I mean if you doubt that there is no longer a Christian consensus

on abortion, if you think maybe I'm being just a little bit too much extreme or embracing positions that are extreme, just take a look at some of the recent books that have come out. I have three right here. This is a new -- relatively new titles. *Pro-Choice and Christian: Reconciling Faith, Politics, and Justice* by Kira Schlesinger. We have *Abortion and the Christian Tradition: A Pro-Choice Theological Ethic* by Margaret D. Kamitsuka. And then this one's a real doozy, this is *Life's Work: A Moral Argument for Choice* by Dr. Willie Parker. Dr. Parker is a proud Christian abortionist. I mean his book is living testimony to the prophet Isaiah's denunciation of a morally bankrupt culture such as ours. Isaiah said in *Isaiah 5: Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

Russell Moore of *The Gospel Coalition* said of a recent article written by Dr. Parker: "It is one of the most disturbing articles I've ever read. The current issue of *Esquire* magazine profiles the 'abortion ministry' of Willie Parker, a doctor who flies in and out of my home state of Mississippi to perform abortions at the state's only abortion clinic. The word 'ministry' isn't incidental.

Dr. Parker says he aborts unborn children because Jesus wants him to. Parker, the article says, preached in Baptist churches as a young man, before going into medicine. He had, he says, a 'come to

Jesus' moment where he became convinced that he ought to do abortions. 'The protesters say they're opposed to abortion because they're Christian,' he says. 'It's hard for them to accept that I do abortions because I'm a Christian.' Parker says his 'come to Jesus' moment, persuading him of the 'call' to abortion, happened when he heard a sermon by Martin Luther King Jr. on Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. By performing abortion, Parker sees himself as the Samaritan, caring for the beaten neighbor on the side of the road."

You see, we as a culture, we have so far devolved from our original horror at the taking of life in the womb to a casual acceptance of it simply as the way things are to a celebration now who takes babies' lives for a living. It's just like Jesus warned us, we've lost the ability to grasp the extent of our own wickedness. This is precisely what happens when instead of leaning on the word of God people lean on their own understanding. I mean if they'd looked to God's word, they would've seen ample evidence that God says, number one, that life is sacred. *Psalm 139: You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.* And second, that babies in the womb are

sacred. *Jeremiah 1:4: Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."* Or *Isaiah* where God says: *Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.* Or *Luke 1:41* which says: *And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.* To third which says that the taking of the life of a baby in the womb is a grotesque evil. We look at *Proverbs 24* which says: *Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, "Surely we did not know this," does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?*

So again we ask where are the Democrats on this critical issue? Well, this is an article written just last week in *Forbes* magazine. The headline stated "Biden Vows to Protect Abortion Rights, Provoking Harsh Response from Trump." It says:

"Biden's position on reproductive rights has shifted throughout his political career. In a 1974 interview with *Washingtonian*, Biden, a practicing Catholic, criticized *Roe v. Wade*. 'I don't like the Supreme Court decision on abortion. I think it went too far. I

don't think that a woman has the sole right to say what should happen to her body,' Biden said. According to *Axios*, he voted several times, including in 1983, to prevent federal employees from obtaining abortion services through their health insurance. In 2006, in an interview with *Texas Monthly*, the former Vice President stated, 'I'm a little bit of an odd man out in my party,' adding, 'I've made the groups - the women's groups and others - very angry because I won't support public funding and I won't support partial-birth abortion.' In 2007, during an appearance on *Meet the Press*, Biden was asked whether he supported a ban on partial-birth abortions or late-term abortions. 'I did, and I do,' he replied."

But all of that has changed. *Axios* now states: "If elected, Biden says he would codify *Roe v. Wade* into federal law and restore federal funding to Planned Parenthood and other reproductive-care providers for health services other than abortion. He also no longer supports the Hyde Amendment, which bans the use of federal funds for abortion except in cases of rape, incest or life-threatening circumstances. Biden's voting record as a senator illustrates how drastically his politics on abortion have changed."

To sum it up, *National Review* says: "Joe Biden supports the right of unlimited abortion, funded by the taxpayers, up until the moment of birth." That's now the official position of the Democratic



party.

I'm speaking with a neighbor of mine awhile back and I don't know if she's a believer or not, I've been trying to get the opportunity to witness to her and we were just chatting about politics and things in general. I noticed that she seemed kind of wobbly on the issue of abortion. I asked her if she remembered the story in Genesis of Cain and Abel and what happened after Cain slew Abel. This is how Genesis puts it in *Genesis 4: And the LORD said -- this is what he said to Cain -- "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."* I asked my neighbor, I said, "If the blood from one single person cries out from the ground to God, what do you think the sound of sixty million aborted babies crying from that same ground sounds like?" I said God says they who sow the wind are going to reap the whirlwind. And I told her right now you're beginning to feel the whirlwind.

So what do we do about it? Well, first and foremost we practice 2 *Chronicles 7:14: If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.* That is priority number one for all of us.

Secondly, we act. A couple of weeks from now we are all going to be engaged in what I consider a sacred duty. We are going to choose a president. And I just wanted to give you a quote that best sums up my attitude towards our present president. He said it perfectly to me and this comes from a man by the name of Tom Klingenstein who's not Christian. He's the head of the Claremont Institute, a very conservative man, very conservative institution, but he summed this up perfectly for me. He said this, he said: "I know President Trump has many faults. I myself cringe sometimes listening to him. Sometimes he is his own worst enemy. He is a braggart, oftentimes misinformed, petty, sometimes even vengeful and more and yet we are very lucky to have him. I am almost prepared to say that having him is providential. How else to explain that we find ourselves with this most unusual, most un presidential man, who has just the attributes most needed for this moment. At any other time he might well have been a bad president but at these times, these revolutionary times, he is the best president we could have had."

I wish Donald Trump was more gracious. I wish he was more humble and less obnoxious than he often is. But when I try to do what Paul commended the Philippians for, to express love bounded by knowledge with discernment, I find scripture to be absolutely critical and abundantly obvious about what choice God wants me to

make. I've said repeatedly in this message that politicians are constantly facing a choice. You either let your faith dictate your response to circumstance or you will let circumstance dictate your response to faith. And I have no idea whether or not Mr. Biden is a Christian, it's not my call to make. But I do know that the positions he now espouses are vastly different than the ones that he has espoused previously. And once again I go to scripture for wisdom. I just look at *Proverbs 20* which says: *Even a child makes himself known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright.* The differences between both parties are stark, and they go to the heart of God's will as expressed in scripture in areas that have little to do with the politics of old and everything to do with openly defying God's dominion in the critical areas of gender and marriage and life itself. And so my prayer for us today is as you enter that voting booth that you too let your faith and not circumstance or emotion or social media dictate your response. Let's pray.

*Father, I hesitated a great deal in trying to decide whether or not to do this message because you're not supposed to wade into politics. Lord, but politics has waded into the church's area. Politics has now become something the church has to deal with and when it deals with gender and with abortion and with marriage and things that are critical to you and your kingdom. So I pray today,*

*Lord, for each and every person, that they would look to you, look to your word, trust in the Lord with all of your heart, lean not on your own understanding you tell us. I pray that each of us would do just that and that you would be pleased with the results. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*