BREW EDTHE OLOGY™

INTRO

Like it or not, Christianity is a *political* religion—but not how our world normally understands "politics." When we say "political" we usually mean "*partisan,*" as in "party politics." But "politics" derived from the Greek *polis,* which simply means *city*, or *politikos,* which refers to the affairs of the state, citizens, and relationships between those people. You could say that "politics" relates to authority and law in society.

As our utmost authority, God calls us to live within God's law. The "law" is everything we *should* do, particularly the 10 Commandments, and *particularly*, the greatest (and second greatest) Commandments.

When Jesus was asked about the greatest law in Matthew 22, he said to *love the Lord your God with all your heart soul, and might.* And! (as a quick follow-up) to *love your neighbor as yourself*. "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments," Jesus said. But! Who is your neighbor? Jesus had an answer for that one, too. Look up Luke 10 (spoiler: it's something about Samaritans). God calls people to co-create a trustworthy world in accordance with that law – to love God and neighbor.

"POLITICAL" CHURCH:

a Brewed Theology conversation starter*

BEING A BODY THAT HAS SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT POWER, JUSTICE, AND LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS

But what happens when the systems of this world get in the way of our living out this calling? In this Brewed Theology, we look at what it means to proclaim that Jesus is Lord while living in both God's Kingdom and the kingdoms of this world.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What is authority? Where does it come from? What or who are authorities in your life? What can you remember (or find) about what the Bible describes as authoritative? Have you ever questioned, resisted, or rejected authority? How do you feel when you hear the word "politics"? Is the church "political" (and what does that word mean)? Does your faith community use or avoid political language or actions? Does the church have an obligation to weigh in on matters that can be labeled "political"? What authority do you give your *faith* – and how does that compare to your favorite political leader or candidates?

BIBLE BASICS

Luke 1:46-55 – A song by Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Also called, 'The Magnificat.'

Romans 13:1-14 – The Apostle Paul, on worldly authorities.

Galatians 5:21-23 – Paul again. On the "fruit of the Spirit."

Micah 6:7-8 – The Prophet Micah. A good barometer for gauging Godly intentions.

ESSENTIAL READINGS and LISTENINGS*

THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE OFFENSIVE

Is the Gospel offensive? And how? Timothy King thinks it is, and should be. *(Note: limited free articles.)*

5 Ways To Be Political The Way Jesus & Early Christians Were Political

Benjamin Corey gives a list of ways to check authority with prophetic witness. Like Jesus did.

WE ARE CALLED TO RESIST

Is "resistance" all about being against something? Not so much. It also means standing up for something – and people of faith are called to do that, writes John O'Keefe.

Two Lessons from History – 15 min

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER AND THE CONFESSING CHURCH

Did you know that during the rise and reign of Nazism some of the church supported it? Did you know there was a resistance against it? Read (or skim) this take by Wendy McElroy.

KING'S LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL: A CHALLENGE FOR US

Read Martin Luther King Jr's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail. It's challenging *for* the church, but also necessary to be heard *by* the church. Read about why King calls the church "a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound" and "the arch-supporter of the status quo," and read why John Dear says it continues to instruct us today.

ANTI-RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY IN THE SENATE

Michael Gearson describes what he calls anti-religious bigotry directed at (now- Supreme Court Justice) Amy Coney Barrett by Senate Democrats at her U.S. Court of Appeals appointment hearing. *(Note: possible paywall)*

EXTRA CREDIT **for all the overachievers.**

WHAT IS "MAMMON"?

"Mammon" is a Greek word for the personification of wealth and greed. How does "mammon" keep people from resisting forces that should be resisted?

The Letter from Birmingham (20 minutes)

Read the entire text of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from the Birmingham Jail by clicking here.

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