A Time to Awaken

(Daniel 2:19-23; 1 Tim. 2:1-6)

Read Daniel 2:19-23

In a moment of political chaos, impending doom on the King's counselors and Wisemen in Babylon, in the midst of a corrupt and pagan government, God used His servants to bring truth and light to the lost and glory to God in the process. ***And*** God honored His servants with wisdom and boldness, courage and mission.

Vs. 19: Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; 20 Daniel said, "May the name of God be blessed forever and ever,
For wisdom and power belong to Him. 21 It is God who changes the times and the periods;
He removes kings and appoints kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to people of understanding. 22 It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. 23 To You, God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter."

*I have been criticized for not being political enough from the pulpit; I have been also been criticized for being too political from the pulpit. Either in my silence or my boldness, I have disappointed people. So, this morning I want to be clear. And I suppose I will need to say this again in two years in our next presidential election:

In **Daniel 2**, it is clear that <u>it is ***God*** who *removes* kings and *installs* kings</u>. (Encourage you?) =God superintends *all* of history and countries' leaders. Good and bad. Our God is sovereign over *this* nation, though the vast majority of this nation has turned it's back on God and is in open rebellion against Him! And for many decades, I believe we are under God's judgment as a nation; Our country's motto is "*In God we trust*" YET… In 1968 the Supreme Court officially banned all anti-evolution laws, mandating that all public schools teach evolution as factual science. That Science and the Bible are at odds – that the idea of divine creation is outdated and scientifically outmoded. Do you think 55 years of public school science education that there is no God and the earth and humans just evolved by chance over billions of years – do you think that might have an affect on young minds and hearts shaping their theology or killing their theology? What does that do to a young mind when their authority figure, their responsible adult in these classes tells them evolution is a valid scientifically-backed theory for the origin of life. Worse, since 1973 (in my lifetime) as a country, we have legally murdered 64 million babies in utero; a whole generation of wasted life. Mutilated, killed, thrown away or sold for parts. In 2003, homosexuality became legalized in the US and in 2015, our government legally recognized homosexual marriage; And **Today** our current social struggle has naturally progressed to the very definition of what is a man/woman; what is male/female? How many genders are there? And can the government mandate the transitioning of our children into another sex without their parents' permission or even knowledge… In our Gov't, public schools, public programs, on TV, in social media across the nation, <u>these are the ideals, agendas, and programs that are being pushed on our children.</u> If there is any doubt to this, just look up

how many 12-20 years olds *now* identity as either being homosexual, trans, or neutral (Non-binary gendered) compared to the last ten years in every decade for the last fifty years. *The agenda of the devil to disciple and confuse our children is working. Between our government, our public schools, the media, social media, Hollywood, (including Disney, Nickelodeon, and the like), and free & rampant pornography … the agenda to disciple your children is a multi-billion dollar industry to convince them that God is absent; the Bible is outdated; and the Church is irrelevant. *It has worked*. It has devastated generations. And I believe we are under God's judgment as a nation. Do you not?? Do you think God is pleased with our choices, our elected leaders' decisions which reflect their constituents, our moral decay as a country?

And still, the Church exists to be the conscience of the nation. To be salt and light amidst the growing darkenss. To be truth, to live out the gospel in the subtle creep of godlessness in our culture. Yet, a nation who continues to reject God and place leaders over them who thwart God's truth (right **or** left) get what they deserve. Can we be surprised? Should we?

1 Sam. 8 (in the election of King Saul as the first King of Israel) is a reminder to our church, to our state, to our entire country that when God's people demand a leader or leaders according to *their own* desires (rather than God's), there are always serious consequences. In other words, a country gets the leaders it deserves. In our country, be they Republican or Democrat – (like Saul) if they choose to be men-pleasers rather than God pleasers – it always spells disaster for the entire country. People suffer. God is dishonored. And it should always lead to repentance! Will it for our nation?

Think about this: Here, as just one church in the United States, at the WELL, we are trying to send missionaries to plant churches in both socialist countries and Muslim countries … and this is right and righteous and faithful as every New Testament church should be. And yet, just this past week, as a nation, 7 socialists and seven muslims were elected to congress and we have our very first muslim senator. 150 democratic socialists won down-ballot races nation-wide. Is that significant? YES! These leaders have ideological and theological convictions that are in defiance to Scripture. *But what's worse?* Supposed Christians in politics or elected pastors who profess Christianity yet deny the clear and basic teachings of Scripture? Beware church. People are watching and being influenced and being duped by a false Christianity. Elections always have consequences.

We need to take a deep, hard look at the soul of our nation that has run steadfastly against the truth of God and run from the presence of God. Left or right, democrat or republican., we have forsaken the Lord God in so many ways. We are the very definition of an idolatrous and adulteress Generation. We have no right to point our fingers at ancient Israel in their rebellion of God. We have mastered it in the U.S. **The sleeping church needs to awaken** and assume our rightful role as a conscience of a nation, and *in love,* **speak truth**, live out the gospel, and never give up until He returns!

Church hear me: I'm *not* mad at people or politicians, I'm not upset or surprised by the outcome of any election. I don't hate people. Rather, I am broken-hearted for the disordered, confused, and spiritually blind world that believes what satan has duped them into believing and endorsing through our Government and media. I *am* angered and outraged at the devil! The devil hates *this* country and the ideology America was founded upon. He hates that Texas has been a more conservative state for the last four decades. And many politicians are just the devil's puppets spouting his lies. **I am *not* mad at socialists and I don't hate muslims. **I love them**. They need Christ, all of them!

And I'm *not* 'A-political' as a pastor. I voted early before I left the country. I voted my conscience and my biblical convictions, knowing there are NO perfect candidates. But I voted for policy more than personality or political preference. I know that I have to stand before God and answer for whom I voted and their policies which support life, the dignity of the unborn and the elderly to have life, and solemnity to biblical marriage, and who champions biblical convictions like the freedom of religion and common sense on genders.

**I will always be vocal about the right of the unborn to live – for God has empowered each of us to fight for the weak, the helpless, those without a voice but who are made in the image of God. That is less political than it is theological! We have to get this right!! We will stand to account for how we used our energy and lives on this earth to protect life and glorify God in all we do!!

Church, as Believers, we can *never* put our ultimate trust in politicians, elected leaders, or our government. Our hope is not in a country! The Bible is clear that as Believers and followers of Christ, we are sojourners on this earth, strangers and aliens whose truest citizenship is in heaven – and our first loyalty belongs to King Jesus. And to His Word – the Bible, which will never go out of print, never be irrelevant, never fade away or be compromised, nor will it ever return void – because there is *power* in the gospel, power to save Jew and Gentile alike. Power to change lives. Power to transform hearts and rescue souls and restore marriages. Power to plant new churches that impact communities and shine brightly in a dark world. There is power in the gospel. Is that true in your life? Have you been transformed? Are you making your life count towards the eternal things of God?

So what now? What are we to do today and tomorrow and next week -in lieu of our ever-changing political landscape? How do current events affect our lives and our church? How does the threat of religious persecution change how we interact with our world?

1. We Pray. We pray *fervently* to a God who listens and moves His will though prayer. We pray and we fast. We beg God to forgive our nation and our *own* part of spiritual rebellion and idolatry that we have made out anything in our lives that we have put before God. We pray **2 Chronicles 7:14** – to humble ourselves, to pray and fast before the Lord, to turn from our wicked ways, and seek God's face, His very presence. Are we?

READ: -1 Timothy 2:1-6 "First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, *and* thanksgiving be made in behalf of *all* people [our country], 2 for kings and all who are in [a]authority [our elected leaders] so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and [b]dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to the [c]knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and mankind, *the* Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony [d]*given* at [e]the proper time. 7 For this I was appointed as a [f]preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 8 *Therefore* I want the men in every place to **pray**, lifting up holy hands, without anger and dispute.

2. We disciple our families in God's Word.
Vs. 2: "so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity."
-A tranquil/peaceful life is a life grounded & rooted in Christ & His gospel. Rooted in God's Word. Those who know Whose they are and what their future holds!
-Those who are at peace in Christ, who love His Word and Know His Word=discipleship.
Vs. 3: This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

Men, husbands, Fathers, grandfathers, uncles, you are to take the lead in discipling your life, and your wife, and your family - How you raise your children reflect what you believe about God and His Word! AND what you do in response to adversity matters. What you do to ***display*** God's sovereignty matters to your family. What do we really believe about God? It shows when things don't go our way? How do we display His sovereignty and live-out God's Word in challenging times? In economic and political uncertainty? We don't panic. We don't bemoan. We don't stop giving to the Lord's work. We don't stop coming and serving. **We press on** to what matters to the Lord. Believers in many countries suffer because of their government and are persecuted. They remain faithful to Jesus. And so will we!! We've been a divided nation politically for a longtime. And in the future, new or challenging policies will make it clear morally, financially, socially & theologically how we are to respond.
We must disciple our families*. ***Men*, it is never to late to start!! It starts w/you now!!! We have so many faithful women, so many faithful moms; YET, children and teenagers, and young adults need to see Christ alive and lived-out in the hearts of our men!! C'mon brothers – we need to step up and LEAD!!!

3. **We Advance God's Kingdom**. We love, live, and *share* the life-giving gospel with our world -starting in *this* community, in *your* neighborhood. We are to help build His Church and grow His Bride. We are to Disciple our children and teens; Raise up and send missionaries. And Become missionaries in our own neighborhoods. **God is awakening His Church.** GOD is calling us to be a sending Church:

Vs. 3: This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who wants *all* people to be saved and to come to the [c]knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and mankind, *the* Man Christ Jesus, 6 who *gave* Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony [d]*given* at [e]the proper time. **Jesus' very life was missional!**

A sending church knows **where** God has placed them and how to make the most of the time He has given them; A sending Church knows how God has equipped them, encouraged them, and blessed them to be a blessing to others. We must be a missional church about the Father's business of seeking and saving the Lost. God has called the WELL to be a sending Church. We will pick this up next week.

Vs. 7: For this I was appointed as a [f]preacher and an apostle, as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Community Group Questions

1. As a community group, maybe begin your time together in prayer for our church, the leaders of the WELL, our state, our country, and the new leaders who will be leading for the years to come. What are some specific and biblical ways we can pray for them?

2. Individually and as a community group at the WELL, how are we doing in our prayer lives? How can we improve the frequency and focus of our prayer lives? Are we keeping a prayer journal of how/when God answers prayers? Why does Paul in 1 Tim. 2 begin with prayer as the main action for the Church? How does prayer inform every other spiritual discipline of our Christian walk?

3. How are we doing in discipling our whole family? Honestly, do you feel equipped to faithfully disciple your children? Your teens? Your grown kids? Grandkids? What tools would be helpful to help you more faithfully disciple your family?

4. How are we doing as a church to advance God's Kingdom through the WELL? What does it mean practically to be advancing God's Kingdom in Argyle (or where you live)?

5. Were you offended by Sunday's sermon? If so, how and why? What is an appropriate spiritual takeaway/application of the sermon? Is there a line (what is too far) where the church should not be political? What does the Bible teach about politics in general? How is the Church to make a difference in the world and not address politics?