

QR SLIDE FIRST THING - CHRIS MARTIN

- Welcome & Connect Table
- **SLIDE** Pastor's Coffee

INTRODUCTION **1 TIMOTHY SLIDE**

Hey, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Timothy chapter 2.

There were hard-backed black bibles as you came in...

- You'll find 1 Timothy 2 on page **991**.

INTRODUCTION: NEUROSCIENCE

Alright! Today we are talking about **SLIDE POLITICS**.

- And so, I want to start with neuroscience.
 - Obviously!!

Let's talk about how our brains work...

- because it seems to me...
 - that our brains might be the least working part of us...
 - when it comes to politics.

There are two parts of the brain that I want you to understand today.

The first is called your AMYGDALA.

- The amygdala moderates stress hormones...
- such as adrenaline and cortisol.
 - The amygdala is the primal...
 - carnal...
 - emotional response part of the brain.

It helps our bodies identify threats and fears.

The second part of the brain I want you to understand...
is your PREFRONTAL CORTEX.

- The prefrontal cortex is where rational thinking occurs.
 - It helps us reduce impulses.
 - It affects cognitive flexibility.

So, imagine a wolf was coming at you,

- your amygdala fires in one of three primary responses:
 - fight, flight, or freeze. Ok?
 - *I'm gonna fight this wolf!*
 - *Or I'm gonna run from this wolf!*
 - *Or I'm gonna play dead.*
 - Those are fear based responses.

Now, you might wonder, "*when does the prefrontal cortex kick in?*"

By thinking...reasoning...considering?

- *Am I standing between this wolf and her cub?*
- *Do I have a nice trout on the fire?*
 - *Is this one of those friendly wolves...*
 - *that they've reintroduced to Colorado?*
 - Told you this was a political sermon!

But here's the fascinating way our brains were wired to preserve life.

- When the amygdala is triggered by stress or fear...
- it doesn't want the prefrontal cortex to kick in,
- cause those precious moments could cost you your life.

And we know this from modern neuroscience and brain scans.

- When the amygdala is engaged due to stress or fear...
- the prefrontal cortex shuts down.
 - If you think...you're dead!

- And your brain would rather you be alive and dumb...
- than thinking and dead.

APPLICATION: ANGER

Now, why am I bringing all this up?

- Well, I was watching the Broncos...
 - crush the Raiders last Sunday.
- and during every commercial break,
- I was barraged with political ads.

And what is the ONE THING that every single ad has in common?

- They feed on my stress and fear!
 - I found myself getting angrier...
 - and angrier...
 - and angrier...
 - AND THE BRONCOS WERE DOMINATING!

You see, advertisers know this neuroscience.

And they know...

- if a political party,
- or a politician,
- or a special interest group...
 - can activate your amygdala concerning their agenda...
 - they've got you.

EXPLAIN: POLITICS

So, today we're going to talk about politics.

And I have been planning on preaching on this topic...

- for more than a year.

So, I've been listening to and reading guys that I respect.

- Ed Stetzer
- Matt Chandler
- J.D. Greear
- Tim Keller
- Josh Butler

So, I'm gonna be standing on their shoulders...

But it also just so happened that in 1 Timothy chapter 2,

- Paul gives me a launch pad to talk politics.

So, two quick things:

- Where the Bible and theology speak I want you to listen.
- Where I talk and share opinions, I want you to consider.
 - You don't have to agree with or like my opinions.
 - But Christians better listen to God's Word.

Everybody in this room will probably disagree with me at some point.

- I am an equal-opportunity offender today!
 - But I am gonna go a bit harder than I normally do...
 - and I'm gonna try to use the prophetic edge of my voice...
 - to critique some of the political maelstrom we are in.

And I don't have time to go into the biblical reasoning behind every policy.

- But I've preached sermons on many of these topics.
- Additionally, we're doing a podcast this week to GO DEEPER.
- But if you have any questions, reach out to us!

TRANSITION

So, I'm gonna circle back to a section of 1 Timothy that we skipped over...

- but I promised I would come back to it.
 - And I'm a man of my word...
 - unlike all politicians.

Now, in 1 Timothy chapter 2...

- Paul teaches on how people should behave...
 - in the gatherings of the church.
 - We skipped ahead and covered the instructions...
 - for men and then for women in the church.
- But verse 1 starts with a more general address.

1 Timothy chapter 2, starting in verse 1:

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

[1] First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, [2] for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

EXPLAIN: PRAYER

- Paul's first priority...
- when the church gathers...
- is prayer.

Paul stresses the need...

- for all types of prayers...
- for all types of people.

And verse 2 gives us a more dialed in, WHO.

- WHO are we to be praying for when we gather for worship?
- For kings and all who are in positions of authority.

A busy and influential city like Ephesus would be thick with people like this.

And I want you to note that Paul starts right there.

- Paul is gripped...
 - that if there is any chance for change.
 - If there is any hope for the world.
 - If there is any opportunity for...
 - a peaceful and quiet life,
 - godly and dignified in every way.
- If that is ever to occur...it's gonna start with prayer.

Verse 3:

1 TIMOTHY 2:3-7

[3] This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, [4] who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [5] For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [6] who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. [7] For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

EXPLAIN

Now, WHY does Paul want us to start with prayer...

- for the kings and authorities?
- Even those who we so disagree with?

Verse 4:

- because the heart of God...
 - is for all people to be saved...
 - and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

So, this goes back to the second half of our vision statement:

REACH WIDE.

- As we GO DEEP as disciples of Christ,
 - we are to pray for our leaders and authorities,
- because God's mission is for us to REACH WIDE to them,
 - that they might respond to the Gospel and be saved.

So, to quote Ed Stetzer:

- THE MOMENT WE'RE IN...
- DOES NOT PAUSE THE MISSION WE'RE ON.

Listen, the early church in Ephesus...

- was in a far more difficult environment to live in...
 - as the people of God...
 - with the ethics and values of the Bible...
- than the moment we're in!

We believe a lie when we think, "It's never been this bad!"

It's been FAR worse!!!

But Paul wants them...and us...to know...

- that the MOMENT they're in...
- doesn't pause the MISSION they're on.

So, what I want to do is to use that premise...

to launch into a conversation about politics.

PREMISE

So, here's my premise:

23 days from now...on November 5th...we will cast our ballots.

And, I don't know if you've noticed...

- but it seems that both sides of the political spectrum...
- are trying to grab our votes using our amygdala.
 - And I'd like us to resist that...
 - I'd like us to use our prefrontal cortex this morning.

Additionally,

- I'd like for us to attempt to preserve unity in this body,
- even if we have differing opinions on politics.

Because believe it or not...

- the election may be over on Tuesday, November 5th.
 - But we'll be back here on Sunday, November 10th...
 - and January 26th, the Sunday after Inauguration Day...
- regardless of who is voted into office.

So, I want to bring up three distinct parts of the MOMENT we're in.

POLICIES, PERSONS, and PARTIES.

EXPLAIN: POLICIES

There are a number of **SLIDE POLICIES**

- that we as Christians ought to be concerned with...
- in this year's election cycle.

And you say, "*Woah, woah, woah, pastor...don't go getting political on us.*"

But hold on a second...

- our biblical worldview informs how we see things.

And some of these “political policies”

- are not simply politics...
 - they’re issues the Bible addresses!
- Many of the political issues that we are talking about...
- have biblical truths that inform our thinking about them.

EXPLAIN: HISTORICAL CHURCH

Historically, Christians have been marked by four main social ideals:

- Our racial diversity.
- Our care for the least of these, the poor, and the sick.
- Our commitment to a Biblical sexual ethic.
- And our unwavering commitment to the sanctity of life.

And Tim Keller notes: that what’s ironic, is that today...

- the marks about race and the poor sound liberal to us.
- And the sexual ethic and life ethic sound conservative.

APPLICATION

So, Christian, as you think about what policies you might vote for... you should BIBLICALLY consider these things.

- That’s not getting POLITICAL...that’s getting BIBLICAL.
 - Yes, we should consider issues like the unborn.
 - And yes, we should consider issues like marriage.
 - But we are also concerned with policies...
 - dealing with race..
 - and justice...
 - and any law that affects the marginalized.

- So that opens up discussion...
 - about immigration...
 - and refugees...
 - and economics...
 - and taxes...
 - and entitlements.

These are all political issues that we need to be biblically informed on.

And, oh by the way, on some of these issues...

- well meaning,
- Biblically informed,
- intellectual Christians
 - will have different opinions on.
- And that's ok, too.

So, here's one of my favorite Tim Keller quotes on these things:

SLIDE *"The Bible binds my conscience to care for the poor, but it does not tell me the best practical way to do it. Any particular strategy (high taxes and government services vs low taxes and private charity) may be good and wise and may even be somewhat inferred from other things the Bible teaches, but they are not directly commanded and therefore we cannot insist that all Christians, as a matter of conscience, follow one or the other.*

SLIDE *The Bible binds my conscience to love the immigrant—but it doesn't tell me how many legal immigrants to admit to the U.S. every year. It does not exactly prescribe immigration policy. The Bible tells me that Abortion is a sin and great evil, but it doesn't tell me the best way to decrease or end abortion in this country, nor which policies are most effective...*

SLIDE *This means when it comes to taking political positions, voting, determining alliances and political involvement, the Christian has liberty of conscience. Christians cannot say to other Christians “no Christian can vote for...” or “every Christian must vote for” unless you can find a Biblical command to that effect.”*

EXPLAIN: WEIGHT

Now, as we talk **SLIDE POLICIES**

we also need to use our brains to discern the WEIGHT of these policies.

- Because not all policies WEIGH the same.
 - And different Christians WEIGH different policies...
 - with greater heaviness or lesser.

So, not only do you need to let the Bible...

- inform where you STAND on policies...
- but you need to WEIGH them.

So, here are some measures on the Colorado Ballot:

- Property tax exemptions for veterans.
 - Repealing the definition of marriage in the constitution.
- Funding for charter, private, and home schools.
 - Adding a constitutional right to abortion.
- Firearms and ammunition tax.
 - Prohibition of big cat hunting.
 - And you know how I feel about cats!

But listen, these don't all weigh the same!

- While WHAT and HOW MUCH we're taxing is important...
- issues dealing with life WEIGH more heavily!

EXPLAIN: PERSONS

So we use our brains...

- and we think biblically about POLICIES...
- BUT there will also be **SLIDE PERSONS**.

And this brings us to another big ticket item...

- that seems to dominate the discussion about politics this year,
- and that is the matter of CHARACTER.

This year,

- especially in the presidential race,
- the issue of CHARACTER is in the spotlight.
 - It's President Trump's character...
 - against Vice President Harris' vibes.

And some will argue that CHARACTER has nothing to do with it.

- It's only about POLICY...
- and what that candidate can get done in office.

But I would argue...

- that the character of the PERSONS we are voting for...
- is also a weighty matter.

- I can't imagine that it's God's intent...

- for Christians to want people of low character...

- who get things done in office...

- to be the standard for political leadership.

Now, in the Bible, God often uses people with questionable character...

- He is sovereign over even those with poor character...
 - God lifts them up and puts them in place,
 - even those with questionable traits.

But, even with that said,

- to the degree that I can...
- I want to seek out people of character for positions of authority,
 - because over time...
 - that will establish the type...
 - of character-based leadership...
 - we need for our nation.

So, we ought to be asking questions of every candidate:

- How do they behave?
- How do they speak of other people?
- How do they handle pressure?
- How consistent are they in their politics?
- Are they playing games to garner votes?
- Are they trying to manipulate the voters?

And it's not quite as binary as the media would like you to believe.

- That Trump is evil...
- and Kamala is all vibes.

Just to be really clear, they both have some serious character issues.

- I think both politicians...
 - and political parties...
- are doing everything they can to manipulate us.
 - They're preying on our stress...
 - and our fears...
 - and our anxieties...
- and they're trying to capture our votes through our amygdala.

So, CHARACTER should be included in our decisions...

of who we ultimately cast our vote in favor of.

EXPLAIN: PARTIES

Now, there's one more P I want to talk about.

And that P is **SLIDE PARTIES**.

Once again, to quote Ed Steter:

*“we should function more like Baseball umpires:
the Christian ought to be calling balls and strikes.”*

- We should be calling out when policies or persons...
- are incongruent with a biblical worldview...
 - REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL PARTY!

Hey, this is just my opinion, ok?

- But I would really discourage you...
- from being completely partisan...
- in how you vote.

By that I mean,

- thinking that the Republicans can do no wrong...
- or that the Democrats can do no wrong...
 - and so, instead of turning on your brain...
 - and thinking about these things...
- you just vote down one side of the aisle or the other.

I don't think that's the best way to vote, my friends.

Christian, you and I are to hold a prophetic voice of critique...

- **to call out things that are right...**
 - **and things that are wrong...**
- **EVEN IN OUR PARTY OF PREFERENCE!**

**If you are unwilling to critique the persons or parties that you prefer...
you're worshipping the wrong thing!**

APPLICATION: MY CARDS

Now, I talked to the elders about this on Monday night...
so, they know what I'm about to say...

but I feel deeply concerned with politics right now.

REPUBLICAN PARTY

I feel unbelievably frustrated...

- with the state of the political right...
- in the USA right now...
- specifically the Republican Party.
 - See how weird it just got in here?
 - I've got things to say about the left...
 - but just bear with me.

The political right, specifically the Republican Party,

- has developed a strategy to co-opt *us*...
- and make *us* their people.
 - And by *us*, I mean *Evangelical Christians*.

Here's how I know it:

- *Evangelical Christians* are now a voting demographic.
- We are a constituent to them.

And they've taken abortion, and are using it against us!

- They know we're easily manipulated.
- And we are easily worked into a frenzy.
- And that we can be controlled by them.
 - But they are not for us!
 - And frankly, it's hard to even consider them pro-life!

Listen: LIFE IS NOT AN ISSUE FOR THE STATES! It's an issue to GOD!

To them, *evangelical* has become another code word for MAGA.

- But they do not all believe what we believe.

They have taken our theological identity...

and marketed it into an ideological position.

- They have stolen our word: *Evangelical*...
 - and they have claimed to represent us.

And it infuriates me!

- Because they do not represent me...
- or the Jesus of the Bible.

And they have continually chosen a man to represent “us”

- who I wouldn’t let near the kids ministry at Fathom!

I don’t trust former President Trump!

- You know why?
 - Trump has already pulled back on things...
 - he once said to get us on his side.
 - What’s to say he won’t do that again!?!

So, I am deeply concerned with the Republican Party.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

But then, when I look at the policies and worldviews...

- put forth by the political left,
- specifically the Democratic Party.

I am appalled!

- It is morally deplorable,
- from a seared conscience,
- and I would say, demonic.

I've preached a whole sermon on the issue of the sanctity of life...

- but the legislated beliefs from the left...
 - about the life of the unborn...
 - which is why we partner with...
 - Alternatives Pregnancy Center.
 - and increasingly the lives of the elderly...
 - the chronically ill...
 - and even the mentally ill...
 - Did you know that it is estimated...
 - that up to 90% of unborn children...
 - diagnosed with Down Syndrome are aborted.
 - Abortion has almost eradicated...
 - Down Syndrome...
 - by murdering them!
 - Even though their life expectancy...
 - is now up to 50 years old!
 - Another reason to serve those families...
 - at All Stars Club, church.

This is incompatible with what we believe as Christians!

And back to what I said earlier...

- I'm not getting political...they got theological.

They came into our camp...

- when they started calling unique, living people...
 - created in the image of God...
- clumps of cells.

They got theological...

- when they started redefining marriage...
- as not being between one man and one woman.

You started playing in our realm...

- when you try to tell me gender isn't rooted in biology...
 - and then start pushing that sexually perverse stuff...
 - on our elementary school children!

They have crossed the line!

- We're not talking about highways...
 - or taxes...
 - or the national defense...

They are messing with things they've got no business messing with!

TRANSITION

- So, you've got all this evil nonsense on the left...
 - and I'm using the word EVIL intentionally!
- And then you've got a liar on the right,
 - whose policies I may like more...
 - but I don't know where Trump's gonna pull back...
 - or renege...
 - or change his mind to serve himself...
 - which he's already done!

So, I want you to use your prefrontal cortex and to think about these things!

- Think about POLICIES.
- Think about PERSONS.
- Think about these PARTIES.
 - And WEIGH them out!

The problem is, no one wants you to think!

- They're trying to appeal to our emotions...
- and whip us into an anxious...
- fear-based frenzy.

They are playing a manipulative game with our amygdalas!

- *Make 'em angry...*
- *make 'em afraid...*
- *and they'll do what we want!*

DON'T BUY IT!

CONCLUSION

So, here's how I want to end.

I want you to do three things this month as we march towards the election.

I want you to **SLIDE W/PADS THINK. PRAY. VOTE.**

- I want you to do some really intentional THINKING...
- and some really intentional PRAYING about these things...
 - remember back to the first section of this sermon...
 - nothing is going to change if we don't pray!

But I want you to use your MIND and your HEART as you WEIGH this out.

- And then I want you to VOTE as best you can...
 - as a Biblically informed Christian.

And that's the best we can do!

- I want you to be obedient to the Lord...
- AND be a good citizen of this great nation we live in...

But I don't want you to put any of your hope in what's coming politically!

Cause we're still gonna be here...

- on November 6th, and 7th, and 8th...
 - we'll still be here.
- Your church will still be here.
- Your small group will still be here.
- Your friends will still be here.

Christian, our ultimate hope isn't in who or what gets voted in on the 5th!

- People get WAY too caught up in some of this stuff.
 - It is important!
- But people get WAY too caught up in it!

REMEMBER:

- **THE MOMENT WE'RE IN...**
- **DOES NOT PAUSE THE MISSION WE'RE ON.**

POLITICS is not where our HOPE is found.

- **Jesus is who our hope is in.**
 - **Not in any policy or person.**
- **Jesus is going to be on the throne...not Trump or Harris.**

And, hey, when you and I get angry or anxious...they win!

- So, I want us to bring that stuff to the Lord.

And I want to do that today by reading a hymn from Colossians chapter 1.

- **SLIDE** This is known as the Christ hymn.

Jesus Christ is who sits on the throne.

He is the King of kings!

And Lord of lords!

- And so, would you please stand with me?
- I'd like us to read this aloud, and pledge all our hope here.

COLOSSIANS 1:15–20

[15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. [17] And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church. **SLIDE** He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. [19] For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

- Butler, Joshua Ryan. The Party Crasher.
- Chandler, Matt. *Thrones & Thorns*.
- Chandler, Matt. *Light and Likeness*.
- Delony, John. *How Our Brains Work*.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Gospel & Politics*.
- Towner, Philip H. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. The Letters to Timothy and Titus.
- Yarbrough, Robert W. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. The Letters to Timothy and Titus.