

Remember the presidential election?

- The ongoing investigation into Russian meddling?
- The controversies over immigration, tariffs,
- property taxes, pardons,
- the 1% and tax increases?
- The allegations of corruption and conflict of interest?

Womanizing, lies, deceit,

double-tongued policies,

and all kinds of back-channel and public corruption

have described high-level rulers throughout history.

Well, now we know where it all comes from.

Humanity chose it –

God's people elected it – desired it – was greedy for it.

The people had done well with the Lord God as their king and the prophetic word of God as their governance.

In the Name of the Lord, they had recently won a major military victory over the Philistines and recaptured the Mediterranean coastal ports.

The Ark of the Covenant that the Philistines had previously captured – much to their sorrow – was now back among God's people.

God was present, and they were at peace with their neighbors.

They were prosperous and enjoying the fruits of their labors.

Why is it that when things are going well, people often forget that the source of all well-being is God?

Why is it, that when everything is hunky-dory, we think we can just cruise along as though nothing is God's doing?

That it is all ours?

In Deuteronomy, we hear of the Lord giving the people the covenant –

and over and over he says, *“When I give you this land I have promised, it will be filled with houses and vineyards that you did not build or plant.*

All will be well with you and you will have everything you need. But be careful that you do not forget me.

Be careful that you do not put your trust in things, for then it will go badly for you.

The Lord knows the human heart.

And so it was that in those peaceful, prosperous times when Samuel was prophet and judge in Israel,

the ruling sons of Eli the priest forgot God.

They took over the leadership when Eli was too old,
but were corrupt and self-serving,

ignoring the Lord and the covenant established for God's people.

The people wanted to impeach these bad leaders and came up with a plan.

Instead of seeking God's direction or waiting for the next generation of Eli's family, **they decided that they needed a king.**

Never mind that they already had a king – the Lord God Almighty – **they wanted an earthly ruler who would take care of them and fight their battles for them.**

- They wanted a human being who would represent their interests as they wanted.
- They wanted to be like other nations – ruled by a person they could see and admire --not a God of signs and wonders.
- They wanted to trade faith for sight;
 - trust for armies;
 - and hope for politics.

And they truly believed they were getting the better deal.

Even after Samuel laid out for them what they were asking for,
what it meant to be subject to sinful human beings,
they chose it anyway.

This fundamental breach of faith in God

began the slide into the pit of destruction

that ended with the King of the Jews hanging dead on a Roman cross.

Read the brutal details in the rest of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Judges, Isaiah, and all the prophets and the Gospels.

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That death in Jerusalem of Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews,

was as much a turning point for God's people Israel as the insistence on a king in the first place.

For the death of Jesus presents the opportunity for God's people once again to choose faith, trust, and hope in God above all else.

Faith in God's mercy,

trust in God's Word,

and hope for deliverance from wrong turns,

willful rebellion, and selfish forgetfulness of God's love.

This faith is not disappointed,

for that King Jesus rose from the dead on the third day

– fulfilling all hope and trust in deliverance from sin and death.

Peace be with you – he says, showing his wounds. *My peace will never end.*

Follow me, he calls, and *I will lead you into life that will not be corrupted.*

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything else you need will be given to you, he promises.

The governance we need

– the governance that alone seeks our welfare and not the greed of rulers
–the governance that is eternal

is the governance of the heart **formed by Jesus,**

informed by God's Word, and reformed by the Holy Spirit.

When our faithful, hopeful hearts govern us, there are two words that are first to our lips –

When things are going well and we are happy

And when things are going....not well....and we are angry, sad, discouraged, or fearful.

What are these two words from a heart governed by faith in Jesus who died and rose again?

THANK YOU.

- Thank you, God, for our many blessings.
- Thank you, God, even in this difficult time, because you are with us in the valley of the shadow of death.
- Thank you for health and strength and daily food.
- Thank you for the hope of complete wholeness on the day of Christ's coming in glory.
- Thank you for full hands, so that we can overflow to bless others.
- Thank you for empty hands, so that in our poverty, we can receive your blessing.
- Thank you, that our lives are not in the hands of any earthly ruler – past, present, or future—
 - but are secure in you, for the sake of King Jesus, your Son.

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So here's a challenge for this coming week.

When you read or watch the news, say thank you.

If it is good news, thank God for those signs of God's loving presence in our world

and the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish good in the midst of sin's brokenness.

If it is bad news, thank God for the truth that evil has already been conquered by Jesus and so these last gasps are fleeting and temporary.

And for you mathematicians, thank God that all bad news has been subtracted from the sum total of our lives **by the forgiveness of Jesus.**

And because of that, we can **multiply the good news** using the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit in us.

Psalm 146 shows us God's good news that we can multiply in our lives. I close with the Good News translation. (pew Bibles)

146 Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, my soul!

²I will praise him as long as I live;
I will sing to my God all my life.

³Don't put your trust in human leaders;
no human being can save you.

⁴When they die, they return to the dust;
on that day all their plans come to an end.

⁵Happy are those who have the God of Jacob to help them
and who depend on the LORD their God,

⁶the Creator of heaven, earth, and sea,
and all that is in them.

He always keeps his promises;

⁷ he judges in favor of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets prisoners free

⁸ and gives sight to the blind.

He lifts those who have fallen;
he loves his righteous people.

⁹He protects the foreigners who live in our land;
he helps widows and orphans,
but takes the wicked to their ruin.

¹⁰The LORD is king forever.
Your God, O Zion, will reign for all time.

Praise the LORD!

AMEN

And now for something completely different:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1z4vkPWkLQ>