Jesus, Justice & the Third Way (2 of 6)
Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the recent sermons page at our website and at the Grantham Church Podcast the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, October 13th, 2024

Series Focus: In *Jesus, Justice & the Third Way*, we are reflecting on the political nature of the gospel and how we are called to pledge allegiance to the Lamb—not the donkey or the elephant. We are examining Jesus' posture and approach to political matters and seeing how he dealt with political parties, hot-button issues, and the "partisan mind" that fuels division. Join us for this timely sermon series as we consider what it looks like to follow the Lamb in an age of idolatry and division, so that we might be faithful to Christ until he returns and brings the fullness of his Kingdom on the earth.

Sermon Title: Political But Not Partisan
Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:3, 23; Matthew 4:1-11, 10:1-4; Ephesians 6:10-12
Sermon Focus: The gospel doesn't fit neatly into our political categories. Jesus is not a cheerleader for any political party. And he didn't fully align himself with any party in his own day. Rather, Jesus intentionally chose a politically diverse group of disciples and said, "Follow me." What does this mean for how we are called to live out our faith and conduct ourselves politically? In the second message of our series, Pastor David invites us to repent of political idolatry, resist the partisan mind, and faithfully follow Jesus.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Take a couple of minutes and begin by reading Matthew 4:1-11 by yourself, and then have someone read it aloud to the group. How have you understood the temptations of Jesus in the past? What is going on here? Were you aware of the interpretation that Pastor David gave of this passage? What do you think of it?

2. The temptations of Jesus (their nature and placement in the story) are answering the question, "What kind of Messiah will Jesus be?" He has three major areas that he must address: the economic, the religious, and the political. Based on his responses, how does Jesus answer this question? What kind of Messiah is he?

3. Were you aware of all the religio-political options in the time of Jesus (e.g., the Pharisees, Sicarii, Zealots, Essenes, Sadducees, Herodians, and Tax Collectors)? How does it help to know this information when reading and applying the Bible?

4. We can see that Jesus didn't fully agree or align himself with political groups and parties of his day. Now think back to what Pastor David said about the problem with the "partisan mind" and getting your identity from a political group or party. What would it look like for a disciple to refuse to be partisan? If Jesus didn't *fully* align himself with a political group or party, should we? Give some examples from *both* sides of the political aisle today where parties hold positions that don't fully align with our Christian faith. Be specific.

5. Read Matthew 10:2-4 aloud. Did you notice that Jesus chose Simon the zealot and Matthew the tax collector to follow him? These two guys were from extreme ends of the political spectrum. Simon may have even wanted to kill Matthew! What does this tell us about Jesus' intentions with his disciples (church)? How might this speak to us today in our own divided and polarized society?

6. Based on some Christians' speech and behavior today, it would appear that political power is the primary way God gets things done in the world. Why is this not true? What does the Bible say? And why do we often act like this is true?

7. Are you aware that we have congregants all along the political spectrum? How are we seeking to cultivate a culture at Grantham Church that puts identity in Christ before politics and party affiliation? How are we doing? After your discussion, take some time to pray for Third Way unity in our congregation.