

THE PARTY CRASHER

Bible Study



Introduction

Political hostility is tearing apart our relationships and churches. But Jesus is the Party Crasher. He is calling us to refuse to bow to partisan religions, even if we lean one way politically. As we dig into Scripture, we'll see how he is disrupting politics-as-usual and inviting us into a grander vision for kingdom life.

[YouTube Playlist](#): Check out these five videos which go with each day of the Bible Study.



Church Politics

Day 1 > Video

“Jesus is Lord”—the central Christian proclamation—is a political statement. It has to do with who is the rightful ruler of the world and of our lives.

In Jesus’s day, everyone knew that Caesar was lord. He was the top dog, the man in charge. But the early church brought a rude awakening: There was a new King in town. They claimed that Jesus is King over Caesar.

The New Testament boldly declares that because of Jesus’s sacrificial death, “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:9-11).

Upon Jesus’s resurrection, God gave him “all authority in heaven and on earth” and established him as “king of kings and lord of lords” (Matthew 28:18; Revelation 19:16).



Jesus is the desire of the nations, the judge of the living and the dead. The day is coming when “the kingdoms of this world [will] have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15).

The church is called not to impose this reign by force but to bear witness to its reality through our shared life and public witness. To show the world that the King of kings is throwing a better party, forming a common table in a conflicted world. His table has people who lean in all different directions but refuse to bow to the idols that hold sway.

The church’s witness is to follow the way of Jesus, the way of the cross. To do justice, show mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). To embody compassion and conviction, with soft hearts and steel spines, “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). To lay down our lives in sacrificial service, faithful witness, and extravagant love—even for our so-called political enemies—because we follow a King who’s done the same for us.

That’s church politics.

How do your words and actions proclaim that Jesus is Lord?



Scripture

Philippians 2:1-11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!



Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

1 Timothy 6:12-16

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.



Revelation 19:11-16

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.



Our Ultimate Allegiance

Day 2 > Video

Jesus is not just Lord of your life, as we saw in yesterday's devotional. He is Lord of the world. God has given him the nations, exalting him as the rightful ruler of heaven and earth. Presidents and peasants and everyone in between are called to bend the knee before the King of justice and love.

Faith is another politically loaded word. In the ancient world, it meant allegiance. Placing your faith in a leader meant giving them your trust, devotion, and commitment, seeking to align your life with their rule. Putting your faith in the gospel of Jesus as Lord and Savior is a political act, responding to a royal message with public implications.

Christ calls us to a different way of life than the worldly leaders who "lord it over" one another (Matthew 20:25). Christ exercises his kingdom authority in a different manner than the politics we're used to. Yet it is foolish to pretend that Christ's kingdom is simply a private matter for personal devotion rather than one that lays claim to the public life of the world.



Jesus is the incarnation of the Lord described in the Old Testament as “the great King over all the earth,” who “reigns over the nations” and “is seated on his holy throne” (Psalm 47:2, 8). Jesus’s exaltation to the right hand of God’s heavenly throne means he’s now in charge. There’s no higher party, no greater political authority than that.

We need to prioritize our allegiance to Jesus, or our friendships and families will be fractured, our churches will be divided, and the unity for which Christ died will be trampled upon.

The solution is not to become apolitical. I’m also not saying the church should be centrist, always trying to take the middle of the road. There are definite places to be bold and take a stand.

Yet we also have a powerful opportunity to bear witness to the prophetic unity of God’s kingdom. Pledging our ultimate allegiance to Jesus will help us love our neighbors across partisan lines, learn from them, and live peacefully with them. It will bless us with stronger friendships, families, and churches.



Jesus is the incarnation of the Lord described in the Old Testament as “the great King over all the earth,” who “reigns over the nations” and “is seated on his holy throne” (Psalm 47:2, 8). Jesus’s exaltation to the right hand of God’s heavenly throne means he’s now in charge. There’s no higher party, no greater political authority than that.

We need to prioritize our allegiance to Jesus, or our friendships and families will be fractured, our churches will be divided, and the unity for which Christ died will be trampled upon.

The solution is not to become apolitical. I’m also not saying the church should be centrist, always trying to take the middle of the road. There are definite places to be bold and take a stand.

Yet we also have a powerful opportunity to bear witness to the prophetic unity of God’s kingdom. Pledging our ultimate allegiance to Jesus will help us love our neighbors across partisan lines, learn from them, and live peacefully with them. It will bless us with stronger friendships, families, and churches.

Jesus is not only Lord over Caesar, he’s the Lord who is God. Jesus rules.



Scripture

Psalm 47:1-9

Clap your hands, all you nations;
shout to God with cries of joy.
For the Lord Most High is awesome,
the great King over all the earth.
He subdued nations under us,
peoples under our feet.
He chose our inheritance for us,
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.

God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm of praise.

God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.
The nobles of the nations assemble
as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings of the earth belong to God;
he is greatly exalted.



Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

Ephesians 1:18-23

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.



That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.



The New Religion

Day 3 > Video

Politics has become the new religion. We have become like the people of Samuel's day, who demanded, "Give us a king, that we may be like the other nations" (1 Samuel 8:19-20). They wanted the power, prestige, and peace of mind offered by the world's ruthless political powers. Yet God responded, "They have rejected me as their king" (verse 7).

Placing such great trust in the mighty Caesars of our day is—whether we recognize it or not—a rejection of God as King. This is true even if we use God language to justify the real Caesar we serve.

This helps explain why it seems everyone has gone so crazy: We've lost the horizon of the kingdom. To paraphrase political theologian Oliver O'Donovan, when you have God "above" you (as a higher authority over the public life of our world), and his kingdom "before" you (with the assurance of future hope that things will ultimately be put right in the end), it puts things in proper perspective.

You can be involved in politics, but it's not everything.



If your side loses, God is still sovereign and in control. The world may be a mess, but God's future is coming. If your side wins, you can be humble and gracious—there's a bigger matter at stake.

When you reject God as King, however, politics can turn out to be your only hope. Without the grand horizon of his kingdom, the world becomes more compressed, shrunk, restricted. Everything's riding on the next election, on getting this policy enacted or that person in office. So we take off the gloves and fight for victory no holds barred.

Politics is important—but not that important. It can't bear the weight of transcendence, pressure of meaning, and assurance of hope that a world without God places upon it. Only God's kingdom can handle that.

How does Jesus provide what political parties and leaders can't? How can our lives reflect that truth?

Scripture

1 Samuel 8:1-22

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.



But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights.”

Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. He said, “This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and



commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. The Lord answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”

Then Samuel said to the Israelites, “Everyone go back to your own town.”



Psalm 2:1-12

Why do the nations conspire
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,
“Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles.”

The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
“I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

I will proclaim the Lord’s decree:

He said to me, “You are my son;
today I have become your father.
Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
You will break them with a rod of iron;
you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

Therefore, you kings, be wise;



be warned, you rulers of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.



The Party of the Lamb

Day 4 > Video

When it comes to politics, Jesus invites you to bring your lean but submit your bow. “Leaning” is where you have a different perspective; “bowing” is where you have a different allegiance. We all have political leanings. The danger is when that lean becomes a bow, something that competes with your allegiance to Jesus and becomes a functional religion.

Jesus himself called disciples with different political leanings. In the Gospels, he gathered followers who were (revolutionary) Zealots, (status quo) tax collectors, (blue-collar) fishermen, and (white-collar) doctors. Our modern political categories don’t map exactly onto the ancient world, yet there is significant overlap. And whichever way we lean politically, following Jesus is going to be countercultural.

Are you using God language but really serving another Caesar? Is your ultimate trust in the way of the elephant or the way of the donkey (which can both easily succumb to the way of the dragon), or is your trust in the way of the Lamb?



If you are in Christ, your allegiance is not to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party but to the kingdom of God. This King throws a better party!

This doesn't mean Christians won't have political opinions, but it might mean we won't fit comfortably within partisan lines. Sometimes the Word of God calls us to be political in ways that don't fit the common boxes or national narratives.

This is a clarion call to action: to put Jesus back at the center of the church's politics—of your politics—even if that means crashing some party lines. To pledge your allegiance to the world's true King.

Our goal is to reform church politics—that is, how the church does politics—by putting Jesus back at the center. Not to be apolitical but to be rightly political. We dethrone the idols to exalt the King of kings.

“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.’” (Romans 14:11)



Jesus is Lord, the rightful ruler over all creation, exalted over heaven and earth. Each of us is called to bow before this King.

In what ways can the presence of Jesus be more powerful than our strategies, opinions, and policies in our churches and relationships?

Scripture

Mark 12:13-17

Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.



And they were amazed at him.

John 18:33-37

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”
“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”



Romans 14:10-12

You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written:

“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.’”

So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.



Come to the Table

Day 5 > Video

More than theological differences, it is political and cultural differences that are fracturing the contemporary church. We are facing a crisis of political discipleship, in which we need Christians equipped to love each other amid diverse political leanings. Resist the partisan pull. Stay at the table.

Remember that our different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives are a good thing. Jesus gathers us intentionally. He's creating a reconciled community, calling all types of people to himself.

As Paul wrote, “In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female” (Galatians 3:28). Jesus breaks down barriers of ethnicity (“Jew nor Gentile”), class (“slave nor free”), sex (“male and female”), and—I would add—political party (Democrat and Republican).

Why? Paul continued: “For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Jesus died to reconcile a (politically) diverse people. We’re stronger together.



You may have strong convictions, but you don't need to fit into the world's boxes. Healthy political discipleship means your relationships will cross party lines. After all, Jesus didn't die so you could hang out with your like-minded buddies. He died to gather all types of people to himself and to one another. Jesus didn't give his life to make the church an echo chamber; he did it to inaugurate a reconciling kingdom. To establish a community of male and female, slave and free, rich and poor, weak and strong, every nation, tribe, and tongue—and yes, Democrats and Republicans.

We're all hungry for a better world. Yet the "religion" of politics will leave us empty. Jesus invites us to bring our hunger to him. He's the only One who can meet our deepest longings in a way that idols and ideologies can't. He sets a common table in a conflicted world and calls us to come and feast with him.

At the Lord's Supper, the King of the universe feeds us with himself, the bread of his body given and wine of his blood shed, offering communion as the Lamb, who was slain for our redemption. So bring your hunger for a better world, and come to the table of the King.



When have you experienced strained relationships due to political differences? How have you navigated these conflicts? What step could you take to help repair a broken relationship?

Scripture

John 17:20-23

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Galatians 3:26-28

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.



Ephesians 4:1-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”

(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the



Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.



Conclusion

We hope this bible study has encouraged you. Learn more about *The Party Crasher* by Joshua Ryan Butler [here](#).

Consider signing this ***Christian Political Commitment Pledge*** for the upcoming election season (available as a free download [here](#)).

You can also share this commitment with others in your church or small group, as a way of approaching the upcoming election season together.

A CHRISTIAN POLITICAL *Commitment*



Worship

I commit my allegiance to King Jesus over all idols and ideologies. (Exodus 20:2-3; Psalm 115:1-8; Philippians 2:9-11)

Love of Neighbor

I commit to participating in civic life as a means of loving and serving my neighbor rather than just serving my own interests. (Matthew 22:34-40; Philippians 2:1-11)

Image of God

I commit to honoring the image of God in all people by treating them with respect and abstaining from dehumanizing caricatures. (Genesis 1:26; James 3:9)

Biblical Wisdom

I commit to having my views challenged by the biblical story rather than using the Bible to proof-text my predetermined positions. (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16)

Biblical Justice

I commit to understanding and pursuing justice as I engage in civic life, not minimizing Scripture's repeated call to seek justice, and allowing Scripture to critique popular conceptions of justice in our culture. (Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; Matthew 23:23)

Fruitful Speech

I commit to engaging in political discourse with speech that is marked by the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23; James 3)

Peacemaking

I commit to face-to-face conflict resolution rather than vitriolic arguments on social media or talking behind someone's back. (Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 12:17-21)

Removing the Log

I commit to giving more attention to examining the potential flaws in my own political leanings, conduct, and sin than I give to scrutinizing others. (Matthew 7:1-5)

Humble Learning

I commit to being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger as I seek to learn from the varied perspectives within the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26; James 1:9)

Loving Enemies

I commit to loving and praying for my so-called political enemies, especially those I have the hardest time loving and praying for. This includes a commitment to praying for our government leaders regardless of who wins the election. (Matthew 5:43-44; 1 Timothy 2:1-4)



COMMITMENT

During this election season, I commit to following Jesus in my political participation and discourse. While I know that I am a sinner who is imperfect and cannot live out this vision perfectly, I am committed to growing in these ten areas as a means of loving God and my neighbors during these conflicted times.

SIGNATURE
