

# The Party Crasher

## Sermon Outlines

The following are suggested sermon outlines for a three-week series based on *The Party Crasher*. I also give options at the end for extending this into a longer series. Feel free to take these outlines, tweak them, and make them your own!

The goal of this series is to help equip people to navigate the political division going into the next election season with maturity and faithfulness to Jesus.

### Week 1: Pledge Allegiance to the King

*Key Chapters from book:* 1 - 3

*Key Scripture Passage:* 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

*Key Idea:* We pledge our allegiance to King Jesus over the political religions of our day.

#### INTRO

*Why this series?* To help equip us to navigate the political division going into the next election season with maturity and faithfulness to Jesus.

*Adapt and personalize:* themes from pages 1 - 6

*Today's Scripture:* 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

#### I. THE POLITICAL RELIGIONS

##### **There are Four Political Religions Competing for Your Allegiance to Jesus (v. 5)**

*Explain:* in Paul's day there were "many so-called gods and lords" (v. 5) which competed for their allegiance to Jesus. We may not wrestle with literal idols (wood & stone statues) in our culture, but what are the idols and ideologies, the "gods and lords," that compete for our allegiance today?

*Illustrate:* Four political religions compete for our allegiance today

(*Adapt and personalize:* content from pages 6 - 21 - **diagram available on website**)

-*Religion of Progress:* "We can change the world"

-*Religion of Responsibility:* "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps"

-*Religion of Identity:* "Live your truth"

-*Religion of Security:* "Good fences make good neighbors"

*Apply:* There are four political religions competing for your allegiance to Jesus

-which quadrant do you lean toward?

- each has something good (we see all four values in Garden of Eden)
- and each has a danger when it's made ultimate

*Transition:* What do we do?

## II. JESUS IS KING

### Pledge Your Allegiance to Jesus as King (v. 6)

*Explain:* Paul responds to these competing “gods” and “lords,” saying we have but “one God, the Father” and “one Lord, Jesus Christ.” (v. 6) The phrase “Jesus is Lord”—the central Christian proclamation—is a political statement. It has to do with who is the rightful ruler of the world.

*-Adapt and Personalize:* content from pages 27 - 31; consider using the Priene Inscription (on page 27) to illustrate how words like *gospel*, *Savior*, *lord*, and *faith* were politically loaded

*Illustrate:* consider discussing either:

1. in relation to Jesus, we can see the good in each quadrant's core value and the danger when it is made ultimate (pages 30 - 36); or
2. how politics has, for many people, become the new religion competing for their allegiance to Jesus (pages 38 - 41)

*Apply:* Pledge your allegiance to Jesus as King

- he's better than the idols and ideologies
- he's more fulfilling than the political religions (pages 41 - 43)

*Transition:* So what does it look like practically, to pledge your allegiance to Jesus as King?

## III. LEAN VS BOW

### Bring Your Lean; Submit Your Bow (v. 6)

*Explain:* Paul says “yet for us,” (v. 6) there is one God, one Lord. His focus is not so much on what the world's doing “out there,” as rather what *we're* doing “in here”—as the people of God, followers of Jesus. When it comes to politics, you're called 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're all going to have different political leanings, that's okay. The danger is when that lean becomes a bow, a different allegiance, that disrupts the priority of Jesus in your life and fractures our unity as the church for which Christ died.

*Adapt and personalize:* content from pages 47 - 54

*Illustrate:* Signs your lean has become a bow (page 54 - 56)

*Apply:* Bring your lean to Jesus, and submit your bow

- a pastoral word calling people to live faithfully to Jesus, pledging their allegiance to him over the political religions of our day

-the cost if we don't: our families and friendships will be fractured; our church divided; the unity for which Christ died trampled upon  
-the hope if we do: we can bear witness to a world exhausted by hostile polarization of a better way, a better King

**Invitation**  
**Jesus the King**

## Week 2: Ten Political Commandments

*Key Chapters from book:* 4 - 6

*Key Scripture Passage:* Luke 4:5-8

*Key Idea:* God gives us ten "political commandments" to follow Jesus faithfully this election season.

### **INTRO**

*How can we live faithfully to Jesus in this upcoming election season?*

*Adapt and personalize:* anecdotes of crazy political behavior you've seen (like pages 45 - 46).

*Today's Scripture:* Luke 4:5-8

- the devil tempts Jesus with a type of political authority and power that would be corrupt
- Jesus would have to compromise his character and faithfulness to God to get it
- Jesus resists this temptation, responding with Scripture's call to "Worship God and serve him only"

*Transition:* how do we put God first during this election season, worshiping and serving him faithfully?

### **I. TEN POLITICAL COMMANDMENTS**

#### **We Are Looking Today at Ten Political Commandments from Scripture**

*Explain:* these are not the literal "Ten Commandments" God famously gave to Moses at Mt Sinai, but they are things God commands of us in Scripture. (*Adapt and personalize:* content from pages 59 - 61).

(*Note:* for each of the following, adapt and personalize from the content on pages 62 - 98. Feel free to use any of the existing explanations, illustrations, and applications there, but also feel free to contextualize and use your own.)

1. **Worship:** I commit my allegiance to King Jesus over all other idols and ideologies. (*Ex 20:2-3; Psalm 115:1-8, Phil 2:9-11*)

2. **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 (*Phil 2:1-11, Matt. 22:34-40*).
3. **Image of God** : I commit to honoring the image of God in all people by treating them with respect and abstaining from dehumanizing caricatures (*Gen 1:26, James 3:9*).
4. **Biblical Wisdom**: I commit to having my views challenged by the Biblical Story rather than using the Bible to proof-text my predetermined positions (*Psalms 119; 2 Tim 3:16*).
5. **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 (*Is 1:17; Micah 6:8, Mt 23:23*).
6. **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 (*Gal 5:22-23, James 3*).
7. **Peacemaking**: I commit to face-to-face conflict resolution rather than vitriolic arguments on social media or talking behind someone's back (*Mt 18:15-17, Rom 12:17-21*).
8. **Remove 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 (*Mt 7:1-5*).
9. **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 (*James 1:19, 1 Cor 12:12-26*).
10. **Loving Enemies** : I commit to loving and praying for my so-called political “enemies,” especially those whom I have the hardest time loving and praying for. This includes a commitment to pray for our government leaders regardless of who wins the election (*Mt 5:43-44, 1 Tim 2:1-4*).

## II. A CHRISTIAN POLITICAL COMMITMENT

### We Are Asking You to Make a Christian Political Commitment

*Explain:* As we approach the election season this year, we want to ask you to commit to these ten things, to join us as leadership in signing onto this 10-point commitment. (**Note: the 10-point commitment is available for your church as a free resource, downloadable at [joshuarianbutler.com](http://joshuarianbutler.com)**) We are not telling you how to vote, but rather giving guidelines for the kind of character we want to have and posture we want to hold as followers of Jesus.

This is what we believe it looks like to “Worship the Lord our God, and serve him only”

-a pastoral word calling people to put God first this election season, and follow his guidelines for how we are to live—both publicly and privately—as his people  
-sadly, many today believe Christlike behavior doesn't apply in the political arena.  
-yet God commands such behavior for us as his people (there's no political exemption clause)  
-and his ways are better (he's worthy of our worship; his ways are designed for our true flourishing)

**Invitation**  
**The God Worthy of Our Worship**

## Week 3: Formational Practices for a Polarized World

*Key Chapters from book: 7 - 9*

*Key Scripture Passage: Acts 2:42-47*

*Key Idea:* God gives us formational practices to shape us as kingdom citizens in a polarized world.

### **INTRO**

*America has a new national liturgy:* the crisis of the week. (*Adapt & personalize:* content from page 123 - 124; the pressure we all feel “Am I going to say anything?”; the dangers of how this cultural rhythm can form us.)

*Today:* we want to look at formational practices for a polarized world. Rhythms and practices God has given us, which can help us be healthy, mature, and follow Jesus faithfully in our divided world.

*Today's Scripture: Acts 2:42-47*

-the early church committed themselves to four things: the apostles teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.  
-those may not seem political, at first glance, but I want to show you today how these four practices can actually shape and form us politically, as a different kind of people.  
-it did for the early church: they had a dramatic impact on the world around them (*recount elements we see of this in vv. 43 - 47*), and their movement grew to the point that, by Acts 17:6, people were saying they “have turned the world upside down”—they turned the Roman Empire upside down  
-yet it started with these practices. Let's take a look at how these formational practices can form us countercultural for a polarized world.

### **I. CHURCH**

**The First Practice is Gathering Together as the Church.**  
**(v. 42: “the apostles teaching and fellowship”)**

*Explain:* they gathered together as the church, committing themselves to “the apostles teaching and fellowship” (v. 42). Gathering as the church may not seem to have political significance, it can seem simple and easy to overlook, but it actually does. Let’s explore a few ways how.

-*Note:* adapt and personalize elements from pages 124 - 135, utilizing those elements which are a part of your church’s service or which stood out to you, such as: Call to Worship; Confession and Lament; Scripture and Sermon; Communion and Worship. Feel free to use any of the illustrations and applications from this chapter, or to personalize and make them your own.

## **II. SCRIPTURE**

### **The Second Practice is Reading Scripture (v. 42: “the apostles teaching”)**

*Explain:* The early church was also committed to Scripture. At first glance, “the apostles teaching” may sound different from Scripture, but *what* the apostles were teaching was a correct understanding of Scripture. So the early church was committed to growing in Scripture and having a correct understanding of how God has revealed himself through Scripture: *who* God is and *what* God’s done. Committing ourselves to Scripture is a formational practice designed to shape us as God’s people.

-*Note:* adapt and personalize elements from pages 138 - 144, such as: the importance of a healthy information diet; how the political religions can focus on only a part of Scripture or misuse Scripture; how the political religions offer competing stories to the biblical story; the power of saturating yourself in God’s Word.

## **III. COMMUNITY**

### **The Third Practice is Being in Community (v. 42: “the breaking of bread”)**

*Explain:* The early church broke bread together. These meals suggest a more intimate environment: gathering together in people’s homes for food and conversation, investing in relationships, where you could know and be known. Similarly, we really value community and relationships here in our small groups (*or whatever your church calls them*). Want to know one of the best ways to avoid converting to a political religion? Hang out with believers who lean in different directions.

-*Note:* adapt and personalize elements from pages 144 - 146, such as: “The Big Sort” where Americans have increasingly sorted themselves into communities of “sameness”; the dangers of like-minded echo chambers pushing us toward extremes; the power for discipleship of being a community with people who lean in different directions; the power of a meal, asking “who’s at your table?” and who you can invite.

## **IV. PRAYER**

### **The Fourth Practice is Prayer (v. 42: “and to prayer”)**

*Explain:* The early church devoted themselves “to prayer.” (v. 42) When it comes to politics, we tend to reduce God to a cosmic lobbyist—“God, please make my candidate win”—if we pray about politics at all. Scripture gives a much richer vision of prayer, however, where God is the ruler of creation, who invites us into *his* purposes—including politically—for the world.

-*Note:* adapt and personalize elements from pages **147 - 151**, such as: using your ballot as a prayer guide; how to pray for various leaders and pain points in your community; praying not only for daily bread but for the farmers, truckers, and Department of Transportation who provide it; praying not only for health but for the doctors, nurses, hospitals, research facilities, good water policy, and Department of Sanitation who promote health in the community; reimagining news headlines around the inbreaking of God’s kingdom to guide your prayer.

You can also incorporate ideas from the Silence, Solitude, and Fasting section here if any stood out to you (as these are easily related to prayer).

### **Conclusion**

God gives us formational practices to shape us as kingdom citizens in a polarized world.

-pastoral word emphasizing themes like not simply drifting with the cultural tides (which have their own formational power) but following Jesus allowing practices like these to counter-culturally form us as citizens of his kingdom in a polarized world.

### **Invitation**

### **The God Who Forms Us**

## **Optional Ideas for Additional Weeks**

If you want to extend this into a longer sermon series, here are some options for adding additional weeks:

- “Welcome to the King’s Table” (a sermon in-between weeks 1 and 2 above, based on Chapter 3 of the book). This message could be rooted in a passage like Luke 6:12-16, which names the twelve apostles, and highlight the disciples as having diverse political leanings (zealot revolutionaries, status quo tax collectors, blue-collar fishermen, white-collar doctors); the church as a politically diverse community; the dangers of the “new church split” and ideology as idolatry; deepening the call to bring your lean but submit your bow.
- “Breakers, Fakers, and Makers” (a sermon in-between weeks 2 and 3 above, based on Chapter 5 of the book). This would mean tackling the first six of the “ten political commandments” on the prior week of the series, then saving the final four “political commandments” for this week on peacemaking. This could be rooted in a passage like Isaiah 9:6-7a on Jesus’s identity as the “Prince of Peace,” and themes like: our struggles with the word “peace” (hippie; UN blue helmets; yoga & chamomile tea); God’s identity as the “God of Peace” and a richer biblical vision of peace; the four “political commandments” which help us live into God’s calling to be peace-makers rather than peace-fakers or peace-breakers.

- “When To Be Bold” (a sermon in-between weeks 2 and 3 above, based on Chapter 6): this sermon could highlight some specific topics you think are important for your church context, rooted in relevant biblical passages. In this chapter, I highlighted race & justice as well as sexuality & gender, yet you should consider which topics are most relevant and timely for your context. I would encourage picking at least one topic associated with each side of the political aisle, to avoid the partisan associations with only speaking to issues associated with one side. This sermon could include: the call to both prayer *and* action; the five marks of the early church; the importance of a counter-cultural witness and keeping Christianity weird.
- “Creative Options for Political Involvement” (a final sermon in the series, based on Chapter 9): can root this message in Jeremiah 29:7 (“seek the peace of Babylon”) with different ways to seek the peace. We tend to think there’s only three options for political involvement (donkey, elephant, ostrich) but the Bible expands our vision—and church history has much to teach us—for what faithfully following Jesus in the public sphere can look like; the Local Option; the Daniel Option; the Prophetic Option; the Scuba Option; the Monastic Option; the Reform Option. Pastoral word to find the lane that best fits your personality, temperament, experience and opportunity, and to respect the lane that others are contributing through.