

2020 Faithful Voter Toolkit



This tool-kit is designed to help faith leaders implement the Faithful Voter Pledge Card program and build Souls to the Polls and other voter engagement events for their congregations. Research has shown that simply inviting folks to make a pledge to vote is one of the most effective ways to promote voting and build power for their community.

This nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) program is based on the idea that when people pledge to vote, especially in their church community, and are reminded of that commitment just before election day, they are much more likely to vote. This is the magic combination: taking the pledge and then getting a well-timed reminder. In addition, all signers are compared to the state voter file to ensure that they are, in fact, registered. If the signer has been removed from the voter rolls for any reason, we notify them immediately and help them re-register to ensure their vote counts in November.

During Sunday services, invite your congregants to fill out a physical or digital Faithful Voter Pledge Card. We will then mail a postcard to every voter that filled out a pledge card reminding them to vote before the start of Early Voting on October 19th.

Many pastors are already doing great work around voter registration and vote by mail enrollment. If we act quickly, the pledge cards can help us identify even more people that will register to vote, enroll to vote by mail, and vote in person during early voting or on Election Day.

Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or if you need more materials!

Faithful Voter Materials:

Faithful Voter Website: <https://www.faithfulvoter.org/florida>

Digital Pledge Card: <https://p2a.co/fhkwp0>

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1. How to use the Pledge Cards in your congregation:

1. ASK your congregation to pledge to vote this Sunday. Some people say they don't vote because they've never been asked. A pledge card is a great way to do this. Take a moment from services to ask your congregation to join you in pledging to vote by filling out a physical or digital pledge card. With Election Day only a few weeks away, this is a great thing to do as a reminder each Sunday leading up to the election.

2. DISTRIBUTE the physical or digital pledge card. Share the pledge card with your congregation in services or at bible study, or insert them in your church bulletin. Be sure to take a moment in the service to call everyone's attention to the cards and ask them to take the pledge. Physical cards can be collected during the offering and then collected by a coordinator within the congregation. Digital cards can be completed on the voter's computer, cellphone, or tablet. Invite them to share the link with friends and family to make sure they vote as well.

3. COLLECT the completed cards right away. It's very important to collect completed postcards ASAP. Have one person in your congregation be in charge of collecting all completed cards. Due to social distancing, many churches are not meeting in person. In that case, make sure voters fill out the digital pledge card, and take note of anyone that needs to register to vote. We need to collect as many cards as we can so that we can mail a reminder to each voter right before the election. Research has shown that this personalized reminder is one of the best ways to promote voting and build power for our community.

4. APPOINT someone to serve as the Faithful Voter Coordinator for your congregation. It's helpful to have a point person take the lead on distributing and

collecting the pledge cards. They can double check that people fill out the physical or digital card, can answer questions, help register people to vote or enroll to vote by mail, and work directly with our Faith Organizers. You can list their name in the bulletin as well!

2. Pulpit Talking Points for Pastors on Faithful Voter Pledge Cards

Important points to share with your congregants on the Faithful Voter Pledge Cards:

- **Faithful Voter Pledge Cards** are a **free, easy public service** to help maximize voter participation in our community. Take a minute to fill out the card now or before the end of the service!
- **Your information will not be shared or sold to ANY outside entities.** This is a public service focused on giving our community a stronger voice in our democracy.
- Pledge cards constitute a personal commitment that you are pledging to yourself and your community that you will vote. The pledge card is a personal reminder of the commitment you've made to vote.
- **Recognize your Faithful Voter Coordinator (FVC)** by name. Let congregants know that your FVC coordinates distribution of the pledge cards, answers questions, and collects pledge cards each week.
- Let your FVC know the names of other pastors who might want to use pledge cards in their congregations. Your FVC can arrange delivery of pledge cards to additional churches around the city, as long as they keep track of which pastors have pledge cards. The FCV can also help distribute the digital pledge card for socially distanced church services.
- **Empower your enthusiastic congregants** to take pledge cards back to their neighborhoods. You know who votes and who doesn't, so let's make sure we ask them to pledge to vote. Let's make sure the whole community shows up.
- **IMPORTANT: Weekly pickup** - Pledge cards will be picked up once each week. You can fill out a pledge card anytime, but no need to take the pledge more than once!

3. Tips for Pastors on Encouraging “Faithful Voters”

“So he said to his disciples, The harvest is great, and the laborers are few.”

- Matthew 9:37

Pastors, deacons, Rabbis, and other church leaders are trusted voices of authority that carry enormous influence. Working together, we can encourage faithful stewardship in our community, help maximize voter participation, ensure everyone has a voice in this election, and that our voices are heard loud and clear by our elected officials.

Below are some tips on the best ways to motivate people to vote. Not all of these will be a good fit for every congregation, so feel free to pick and choose the ones that work best for you:

1. Ask your congregation to pledge to vote using the physical or digital pledge card.

A pledge card is a great way to ask your congregation to make a commitment to vote in this election. Share the physical and/or digital pledge cards with your congregation in services or at bible study. Ask them to join you in pledging to vote, and to fill out the entire pledge card. A few weeks before the election, we'll mail a postcard as a personalized reminder for each person who took the pledge.

2. Thank your congregants by name for voting. Ask congregants to let you know after they've voted and you will thank them publicly. If you thank people for voting in past elections, and promise to thank them again after they vote in this election, it signals to people that you are watching whether or not they vote. Studies show this is a very powerful motivator. Be clear that how they vote is secret, but whether they showed up to vote or not is public information. Pastors can even promise to thank everyone who voted by publishing their names in the church bulletin. We can help you build the list for your congregation. You can also ask congregants to post on Facebook or Twitter with #faithfulvoter and tag you in the post.

3. Remind new voters that their ballot is secret. This is especially important for young adults and newly registered voters, since the experience of casting a ballot is new to them. Research shows that when new voters learn that no one can find out who they vote for, they become less anxious and more excited to vote. If you are conducting voter registration drives, this is a good fact to share. It's even better if you can show new voters a sample ballot.

4. Talk about how voting sets an example for children. Recent polling shows that this simple message helps excite new voters and it's also biblical. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way they should go, and when old they will not depart from it." According to the poll: "Kids look up to adults and our behavior sets an example. One way to set a good example is to register to vote, and to go vote. It's important to show young people that voting matters and is worth the time."

5. Remind people to think of themselves as voters. Identity is important. Reminding people to see themselves as voters helps make them more likely to vote. This is why we talk about being "faithful voters" and taking a "faithful voter" pledge. Or, you could say something like: "As a community of people who vote, we're going to continue voting this November because _____. (insert an important issue for your congregation)." You can also ask your congregation to share their reason for voting.

6. Remind your congregants of their commitment to vote. Every opportunity you have to remind your congregants of their commitment to vote is a good thing, especially from the pulpit.

7. Invite your congregants to take a more active role. Is your congregation blessed with members who have a gift for getting everyone involved in a project? Empower and enable their efforts to mobilize your congregation, whether it's by organizing a Get Out The Vote phone bank, distributing the physical or digital pledge cards, or by getting another congregation plugged in to participate in the Faithful Voter program.

4. LEGAL DO'S & DON'TS FOR CHURCHES & PASTORS:

Encouraging your members to vote is one of the most important ways you can contribute to public life. Telling your members who to vote for or against is never allowed.

DO:

- Participate in non-partisan voter registration and identification (these activities CANNOT be affiliated with a political party.)
- Provide non-partisan voter education (CANNOT be affiliated with a political party.)
- Campaign for or against legislation (as a congregation and/or as an individual church leader).
- Discuss the candidates' positions on issues with the congregation, but only in a manner that is purely informational. Be careful not to compare your opinion on the issue to the candidate's position.

- Allow candidates to make appearances at church events/services if they appear in a private capacity and not as a candidate.

DO NOT:

- Support or oppose the candidates on the congregation's behalf.
- Use the congregation's funding to give financial contributions of any kind to candidates or office holders.
- Convey your personal opinions about candidates to the congregation when speaking as a church leader.
- Publish church editorials that are meant to support or oppose candidates.
- As a part of the congregation, DO NOT distribute candidate campaign literature; however the individual church leader is allowed to do so.

5. FAITHFUL VOTER SERMONS

If you are looking for sermon ideas to talk about what's at stake in this election, below are several 'seeds' you might plant in your sermons:

Let My People VOTE!

Scripture: Exodus 3:7-15 (Amplified)

In June 1965, the Voting Rights Acts languished in the House Rules Committee after passage in the Senate. The late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote a letter urging its passage as the first step in ensuring access to the ballot box. I would like to read an excerpt from his letter this morning to frame my message. In Dr. King's letter we read:

"We cannot rest. Laurels have not yet been earned. We must toil on during the hot sweltering summer months. We must get our long-deprived people registered in the South's infamous blackbelt counties. Voting legislation does not put the names of Negroes on voting lists. We are not so naïve as to believe persons who have traditionally opposed our right to vote will now desist from intimidating us.

There must be change. There will be change. For to deny a person the right to exercise their political freedom at the polls is no less a dastardly act than to deny a Christian the right to petition God in prayer."

The tyranny, oppression and suppression of the 1950's and 1960's is not new. When we read our scripture this morning we'll find that the Israelites suffered much of the same type of tyranny, oppression and suppression of the Pharaoh's they lived under.

Turn with me to: Exodus 3:7-17

"7 The Lord said, "I have in fact seen the affliction (suffering, desolation) of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters (oppressors); for I know their pain and suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand (power) of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a land [that is] good and spacious, to a land

[a]flowing with milk and honey [a land of plenty]—to the place of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 9 Now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me; and I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, and then bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 And God said, “Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve and worship God at this mountain.”

13 Then Moses said to God, “Behold, when I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers (ancestors) has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” 14 God said to Moses, “[b]I Am Who I Am”; and He said, “You shall say this to the Israelites, ‘I Am has sent me to you.’” 15 Then God also said to Moses, “This is what you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Israel), has sent me to you.’ This is My Name forever, and this is My memorial [name] to all generations.”

The verses preceding our text provides us with a short history of Moses. Moses had an encounter that forced him to flee Egypt for a season. When he fled, he crossed the desert, the wilderness, and even the sea. This journey led him to Mount Horeb.

How many of you this morning knows; Sometimes it takes a Mountain, sometimes a troubled sea, sometimes it takes a dessert for God to get our attention. Amen!

We learn that he was born in a time when his people, the Israelites, an enslaved minority, were increasing in population and, as a result, the Egyptian Government and the Pharaoh’s worried that they might align themselves with Egypt’s enemies. In this passage of scripture, we learn that Moses encountered the Angel of the Lord, speaking to him from a burning bush on Mount Horeb, which he regarded as the Mountain of God.

Today, the tyranny, oppression and suppression of marginalized communities across this nation are not unlike that of Egypt. Today, the Pharaohs of our government seek to keep us in bondage, seek to keep us oppressed and suppressed, seek to keep under their God of “law and order”.

We also live in a burning bush moment. A moment that began with 8 minutes and 46 seconds on the streets of Minneapolis. A moment where I hear the voice of George Floyd cry out “mama”! That was a burning bush moment; when Gorge Floyd cried for “mama”, it was heard as, “let my people go”!

As of late, history reminds us that we still are not free, we still live where Pharaohs wish to live, rule, oppress, suppress and dictate.

A victory that once again would cause the Pharaohs of our government to rise and begin their oppression and suppression. Pharaohs who proposed legislation to prohibit the voting rights of felons that had been granted by the people of this state. It would come to pass that other Pharaohs would join in the oppression and suppression to the point, our fight is not over yet! May I suggest to you this morning, God is calling you and you and you and you and you [as you point to the congregation] to be Moses. In this moment, God is saying once again “let my people go”. In this moment, God is saying once again, “LET MY PEOPLE VOTE”!

In closing: there have been many moments throughout history where Moses' have stood in the gap for the oppressed. Harriet Tubman (Moses), Thomas Garrett (Moses), Martha Coffin Wright (Moses), Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Moses) and Congressman John Lewis (Moses) to name a few.

I believe today that we are called to pick up the banner of Moses. I believe today, you and I have to set our people free. I believe today, you and I have to stand in the gap and proclaim "LET MY PEOPLE VOTE"!

I believe today we are on the battlefield of life, my life, your life, your family's life, your friends' life, your community's life and we have an obligation to lead our people to freedom from the tyranny, suppression and oppression of the Pharaohs of today.

The old song says: "I am on the battlefield for my Lord, I'm on the battlefield for my Lord, and I promised Him that I would serve Him 'til I die: I'm on the battlefield for my Lord".

This chorus says "I'll serve Him", and one of the greatest ways we can serve is to exercise our freedom and our right to vote. The battlefield is littered with blood stains of those who made this journey before us, the road to the mountaintop is shrouded with the memories of those who made this trek before us! We must honor them and their sacrifice. You and I must honor their heritage and legacy.

You and I must lead our people to freedom from the atrocities of the Pharaoh's of our time.

We must hold high the banner of passion and compassion and proclaim with a prophetic voice, let my people go, LET MY PEOPLE VOTE! You might be saying, Pastor, how do we do that? Vote in the November 3rd election--and as early as possible.

Stand together as we sing our closing hymn: I'm On The Battlefield

Suggested Closing Prayer: A Prayer for our Nation's Election

O God, we acknowledge You today as Lord, not only of individuals, but of nations and government.

We thank You for the privilege of being able to organize ourselves politically and of knowing that political loyalty does not have to mean disloyalty to You.

We thank You for Your law, which our founding fathers acknowledged and recognized as higher than any human law.

We thank You for the opportunity that this election year puts before us, the obligation to exercise our solemn duty not only to vote, but to influence countless others to vote and to vote correctly.

Lord, we pray that Your people may be awakened, let them realize that while politics is not their salvation, their response to You requires that they be politically active.

Awaken Your people to know that they are not called to be a sect fleeing the world, but rather a community of faith renewing the world.

Awaken them that the same hands lifted up to You in prayer are the hands that push the button in the voting booth. That the same eyes that read Your Word are the eyes that read the names on the ballot, and that they do not cease to be Christians when they enter that sacred voting booth.

Awaken Your people to a commitment to justice, to the dignity of each individual human life, and to the truth that human rights begin when human lives begin.

Lord, we rejoice today, that we are citizens of Your Kingdom, May that make us all the more committed to being faithful citizens on earth.

We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen!

TAKE IT TO THE ALTAR | Ballot Box

Scripture References: Genesis 17:6-8, 15-22 18:9-15 21:1-8 22:1-14

There is a lot to be gleaned from the story of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac. Join me this morning as we explore the many facets of this journey. Our focus will be on Genesis 22:1-14, however, let me set stage with a brief history before we explore that specific text.

In Genesis 17:6-8 we learn of God's covenant with Abraham. In this covenant God promises Abraham, the "I" will make you fruitful, "I" will make many nations of you, you will be known as the father of many nations. God said I will make an everlasting covenant with you and everlasting promise to you and your descendants. To understand this covenant between God and Abraham and his seed the church, let's look at Paul's writing to the church at Galatia.

In Galatians 3:16 we read: "Now the promises [in the covenants] were decreed to Abraham and to his seed. God does not say, "and the seeds (descendants, heirs)," as if [referring] to many [persons], but as to one, "and to your Seed," who is [none other than] Christ."

As we continue to look at God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 17 :15-22 "God told Abraham that (Sarai) his wife must change her name from "Sarai" to "Sarah". What is interesting here is how, that God not only changed "Sarai" name, but in changing her name God changed her role! "Sarai" was known as a noble princess; however, "Sarah" would be known as not only a noble princess, she would be known as the noble princess of the provinces or the nations. You see, God knew what He was doing. His promise to Abraham was that he would become the "father of many nations", if this were to happen "Sarai" (Sarah) had to become the "mother of many nations". This would ensure the lineage that Paul spoke about in Galatians, for it was the seed of Abraham and Sarah that brought forth Christ.

For, Acts 17:28 declares; "For in Him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own writers have said, we are His offspring."

As we move on, in Genesis 18:9-15 we hear of the prophecy of the birth of Isaac and Sarah resistance. In this particular passage, we find Abraham resting under the shade tree near his tent, as he was looking around, he saw three strangers approaching.

The conversation was something like this; Where is your wife Sarah? (Abraham) over in tent just inside the door. Then one the men turned to Abraham and said, this time next year your wife Sarah will have a son. You know Abraham is thinking, dude, I'm 100 years old and she is 90.

Sarah overheard the conversation and laughed to herself. Can't you hear her saying, Lord, I am worn out, I am 90, and you want me to bear a child.

What is interesting here, is that Sarah was completely aware that the promises of God are ye and amen to that belief. But Sarah, like many church folks, Lord, I tired today, Lord, it's just

too hot today, Lord, I just don't have the energy today. Oftentimes it's our own excuses that keep us from the promises of God.

The greatest moment of this story is when Sarah's resistance gave in to obedience and acceptance. Genesis 21:1-8, gives us the account of the birth Isaac that was prophesied about nine months prior. Verse 6, Sarah said "God has brought me laughter". God does have a sense of humor.

Now that we have laid the foundation, turn with me to:

Genesis 22:1-14

Sometime later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied. 2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love-Isaac and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you." 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. 9

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

The mountain of Moriah where God told Abraham to take Isaac and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering would also become the same mountain where Solomon would build the Temple of Jehovah or the Temple of God. There was something significant about Moriah. I believe the significance is you and I are now Moriah, the Temple of God.

Solomon 's temple became known as the dwelling place of God, in II Corinthians 6:6 we find these words: "16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are

the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Yet another confirmation of Abraham's covenant!

We are living in a time where the heart of our country is breaking and the soul of our nation is hurting. History has shown us time and time again, it is these times where the church rises to its purpose.

You see Abraham had to rise up early in the morning for the journey to Moriah. I'm sure there was apprehension in his heart, this journey was like none other he's taken before. He knew it was going to require the death of his son Isaac. I can't imagine the thoughts that ran through his head on that trek up the mountain.

While, Abraham, had a history of trusting of God, for it was God that made the divine covenant with him back in Genesis 17. However, this was different. This was his son!

As Abraham and Isaac approached the top of the mountain, Isaac says: "Dad, we have the wood, the altar and the knife, but where is the lamb?" Abraham's faith once again spoke and said God will provide.

I believe the moral of this part of the story is quite simple. We must be willing to use and sacrifice what we have in order for God to create a NOW moment.

We the church must present ourselves as a living sacrifice, we the church must raise a prophetic voice, we the church must be willing to do whatever it takes, so God can create a NOW moment.

As Abraham prepared the altar, he heard a rustle in the brush behind him, there in that brush was Abraham's NOW moment!

Throughout history there have been those that walked to the top of the mountain, there have been those that have walked through the fires, there have been those that walk through the desert, that have been those that have crossed the raging flood to find their in the NOW moment!

Fredrick Douglas a national leader in the Abolitionist Movement of the mid 1800's found his "now moment" so that generations to come would have a better life.

Harriett Tubman and her underground railroad found her "now moment", so that she could set the captive free.

Lugenia Burns found her "now moment" as the first African American female President of Morehouse College in 1906.

Emmett Till found his "now moment" in a lynching tree in Mississippi in 1955.

Rosa Parks found her "now moment" riding a bus in 1956.

Elizabet Eckford found her "now moment" in 1957 as she walked through the doors of Arkansas Little Rock High School.

Medgar Evers, Andrew Young, Martin Luther King Jr. all found their "now moment", that place of sacrifice that would later become a way for you and I.

Today, I hear the voices of history crying; take up the mantle of freedom, rise and go to the mountain, present yourself as a living sacrifice.

Today, as our country is hurting, you and I must sacrifice so that we can have a NOW moment. Our "NOW" is waiting but it requires us to be ready to use and sacrifice what we have not what we want or desire. In our willingness and obedience, we find our "NOW"!

The prophet said: "If my people who are called my name will seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land."

A Prayer for Voters

Oh, Gracious and Merciful One, I come to you in the Name above all names, the name of your Son Jesus Christ, giving You honor and praise and glory for all that you are. You are the Supreme in Authority, Covenant Making, Covenant Keeping God. I humbly bow my way to You, my way maker. You have given me a clear direction and path to follow, and I thank you.

You tell me in your word that two are better than one, so I pray that You send partners and leaders, and teachers in my direction, those of a like mind and the same heart to fulfill this mission that You have entrusted to me. I thank you for Holy Ghost hook-ups and Anointed alliances to further the plans, ideas, and purposes that you have set before me.

I thank you that you continue to pour out your wisdom and understanding so that I am not ignorant of the plots against the mission. And I am not subjectable to doubt and unbelief which can lead to fear and defeat. I have Your Spirit with me reminding me that the Victory has already been recorded. I need only move forward in the direction that you are leading me.

You are my comfort and peace, and you are with me always, I will walk in accord with this knowledge and understanding in full assurance, knowing that the next step is already secured. My destination is adequately established because You have set it. So, I thank you for those that You will send to assist in the mission. And those that are already in my life to

lead, guide, and encourage me. I know that you have ordered them, and any who come to impede that which You have given me will be recognized and removed or reassigned. Amen!

I AM THE ONE | Social Justice

Scriptures: Matthew 18:10-14, Matthew 12:15-21

This morning I want to explore the Jesus of Justice. I believe in this unprecedented time we must look at the mired challenges facing society and the church and ask ourselves the question, what would Jesus do. One of the most disturbing events of our day was that of the horrific murder of George Floyd and the number of others that have lost their lives to police brutality.

Those 8 minutes and 46 seconds that played out on television as many watched George Floyd's tragic demise led to a moment. That moment led to hours, those hours led to days, those days to weeks, those weeks to months, and those months to a MOVEMENT! This movement brought new life to the Black Lives Matter movement, the movement caught a new wind, it caught new life and continues today like we never saw.

What's disturbing are those who oppose this movement come from a Pharisaical and Herodian mentality. A mentality that says if you stand against our "tradition/s", you don't stand with us. Under the current administration of the US we have seen the rise of "white christian nationalism" and even heard the President say he believes in the God of "law and order". However, there are issues with this tortured theology.

"White christian nationalism" pontificates that "all lives matter", it's their vile attempt at saying if you do not comply with our theology, you are less than. I'm here this morning to tell you; YOU are NOT less than. As a matter of fact, you are more than, because, Jesus left the 99 and sought you out the "one"! Somebody say; "I Am The One"!

Turn with me to: Matthew 10:10-14

10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. [11] [a]

12 "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? 13 And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. 14 In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish."

What I see in this passage is quite simple, we are the "one". We are the "one" in the movement, we are the "one" struggling to protect our families and our loved ones, we are "one" that Jesus left the ninety-nine for. I am the "one", you are the "one"!

The moral of this story is quite simple, you and I are no less important than the 99, those that proclaim "all lives matter" while ignoring the fact that "one" of their own is no longer with them. We are the "one" that Jesus seeks out.

The problem with the 99 is they seek "power", "power" in numbers while ignoring the one, so I would like to explore that a little more. You know, when you ask people how they can achieve

success in our society and among the answers will be “having power.” We live in a world in which having power is seen as being of the utmost importance. In business, in politics, and even in social clubs having power is a key part of getting things changed to the way you want them. We should keep in mind that the push by certain groups for “their rights” is not about equality, but about gaining power.

In the quest for power we find many people who will do almost anything to attain it. In business, we find people that will trample all over co-workers in order to attain the next higher position. Some will compromise their personal integrity in order to get ahead. In social settings, pandering is used in order to get close to those in power, and then gossip is also used to strike down the competition. Politics is filled with those who will say anything in order to get elected. All of us are aware of elections in which the victor was the one who could lie the loudest and the longest. The truth is unimportant in comparison to winning the seat of power.

The situation becomes even worse when these people do achieve the power they were after. They become self-important, all wise and knowing in their own eyes. They abuse those they have power over and they rant and rave against their opponents.

Now there is nothing wrong with Christians rising to seats of power and using that power properly, but there is great danger for Christians to gain and use that power according to the world’s example. The sad fact is that power can and often does have a corrupting influence even on Christians. History is filled with examples of people being mistreated and abused by those who claimed to be Christians. That ought not to be because that is not the example Jesus left us. Jesus had all power available to him, yet His example is that of a gentle servant.

Turn with me to: Matthew 10:10-14

As we examine this text this morning, we are going to find in Jesus the example we need to follow. Success for the Christian does not come through attaining positions of worldly power, though God often does put Christians in those positions, for success for the Christian is not in having power, but in being a faithful servant of the omnipotent God. Jesus never attained any position of worldly power. He never sought such a position; instead He was God’s gentle servant. He was merciful, meek, chosen of God; quiet, sympathetic and unlimited in whom He would minister to as God’s representative.

Follow along as I read this morning’s text. “But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there, And many followed Him, and He healed them all, and warned them not to make Him known, in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, might be fulfilled, saying, ‘BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHO I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL-PLEASED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES. HE WILL NOT QUARREL, NOR CRY OUT; NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS. A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY. AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE.’”

Matthew 12:15 sets us back in the context of this passage. “But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there.” This refers to the plot that was being put together by the Pharisees and

the Herodians to come up with some plan to kill Jesus. At this point in Jesus' ministry, the religious leaders have risen in severe opposition to Him because He would not follow their traditions.

Paul reminds us in Colossians 2:8 "8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces[a] of this world rather than on Christ."

Jesus would not bend to the legalism of His day. He proclaimed Himself Lord of the Sabbath which equated Himself with God and the Pharisees knew it. In Matthew 12:9-13, Jesus gave a positive demonstration that He was ruler over the Sabbath when He positively broke their legalistic traditions and demonstrated true compassion by healing the man with the withered hand. They should have rejoiced over the good thing done for this man, but instead they were incensed that Jesus would not bow to their legalism. Jesus would not submit Himself to the regulations of man that were against the Law of God. Instead of rejoicing, the Pharisees, the legalistic traditionalist, joined together with their normal enemies, the Herodians, who were the Jews that followed Greek/Roman culture and were political supporters of King Herod, and they plotted to put Jesus to death.

As we continue to explore Matthew 12, let's look at the type of Justice Jesus delivered. Matthew 12:15 continues, "And many followed Him, and He healed them all . . .". One of the marks of the godly justice is mercy. We know in the Sermon on the Mount the Beatitudes declare, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." Jesus did not seek after confrontation nor did He seek to escalate conflict. He often avoided it when possible. Jesus had proclaimed the truth, the Pharisees and Herodians were meeting to plot together to kill Jesus, but it was now time for Jesus to continue His ministry to the people. Those who recognized the compassion demonstrated in healing the man with the withered hand would come after Him, and we find that Jesus' compassion extended to all for "He healed them all." Matthew 12:16, 17 "...and warned them not to make Him known, in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, might be fulfilled, saying..."

Meekness is another characteristic of the truly righteous that we see in the Beatitudes. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness is not weakness, but power under control. A meek servant is one who strives only to please.

There were probably several reasons for Jesus not wanting the people to make Him known. Among them would be the fact that such a proclamation by the people would have distorted why He was here.

The stated reason that Jesus warned the people not to make Him known was so that He could fulfill the prophecy concerning Him given by Isaiah. Jesus did not just happen into human history; He came because He was sent by God the Father as:

Matthew 12:18 "BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHO I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL-PLEASSED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES."

This is an accurate paraphrase of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, of Isaiah 42:1-4 which stresses the nature and purpose of God's chosen servant being sent to mankind. The first verse of the quote stresses the relationship of the servant and God. The word translated here as "servant" is not the usual term used, but is a more restricted term denoting an especially intimate servant who was trusted and loved as a son. In fact, it is often translated as "son." In secular usage, it was used of a child adopted into a family as an heir that could never be disenfranchised.

As a human child Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). Jesus had human feelings and emotions. He had times of hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, and sorrow. Jesus' humanity received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so that His humanity would function in accordance with His deity.

Among the purposes of His coming and His deity was to "proclaim justice to the Gentiles." Jesus came to proclaim what is right and true. This was another area that provoked the Jewish religious leaders of that day toward hatred of Christ. They were very ethno-centric and believed that God was for the Jews only. Only on rare occasions did any one of Israel fulfill God's desire in taking the message of God's interest in the Gentile nations to them. Jonah reluctantly did so, and even then his desire was that God would destroy Nineveh rather than reform Nineveh.

Jesus came as God's chosen servant who was filled with the Holy Spirit and He came with a message of hope and JUSTICE for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Today's message clearly lays out the Justice of Jesus! In our first text we learned that in fact we are the "one". We learned the reason for being the "one" in our last text. For Jesus was the embodiment of what we know as the "beatitudes": He served JUSTICE with mercy, He served JUSTICE with meekness, He was chosen by God to deliver JUSTICE to the Gentiles and the Jews (the "one")!

Somebody, say, "I Am The One"! Amen!

Please stand as we sing: "Lift Every Voice"

A Prayer for Inspiration and Courage

God, today we cry, give us a vision of your world as your love would have it:

a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;

a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;

a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;

a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.

Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

6. Suggested Scripture Readings

The importance of justice to God

Do good, seek justice—Isaiah 1:17

The Lord is a God of justice—Isaiah 30:18

Good news proclaimed and God loves justice—Isaiah 61:8 (1-8)

Warning against mistreating the poor, encouragement to establish justice in the city
Amos 5:11-15, 24

What the Lord requires of us—Micah 6:8

Promise fulfilled that Christ will declare justice to the Gentiles—Matthew 12:18-21

Calls to Action

The Lepers at the Gate—1 Kings 3:28

The Timing of Things—Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For Such a Time as This—Esther 4:10-17

Consider your ways—Haggai 1:3-7

A Plea for Justice—Psalm 82

Speaking/Acting on behalf of Others

Esther risks her life to speak on behalf of her people—Esther 4:10-17

The King's mother encourages him to plead the cause of the poor and needy—Proverbs
31:8-9

Look out for the good of others—1 Corinthians 10:24

Philippians 2:1-4

Community Revitalization

Time to Rebuild—Nehemiah 2

Can these bones live?—Ezekiel 37

Hope and Help for the Oppressed, Those in Need

Rebuke for oppressing others—Nehemiah 5:1-13

The Lord will arise to protect the poor from oppression—Psalm 12:5

Woe to those who take advantage of the vulnerable—Isaiah 10:1-3

Break every yoke and let the oppressed go free—Isaiah 58:6-12

Good News for the poor, brokenhearted and prisoners—Luke 4:18-19

Importance of Community

Encouragement to establish justice and do good—Amos 5:11-15, 24

Early Christians take care of one another's needs—Acts 2:42-47

Being Faithful Witnesses

Believers as “salt and light” to the world—Matthew 5:13-16

Helping the “least of these”—Matthew 25:34-46

The Persistent Widow never gave up, keep fighting injustice—Luke 18:1-8

Ambassadors for Christ—2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Maintain good works, meet urgent needs—Titus 3:14

7. Phone Script #1 – “Thank you” for 2020 Voters

Hello, is __[VOTER NAME]__ there?

Hi! This is __[CALLER NAME]__ calling from __[CHURCH NAME]__.

Pastor __[PASTOR NAME]__ asked me to call all the members of our congregation who voted in the 2018 election to say thank you.

Official records show that you voted in 2018, so I wanted to say Thank You for being a voter! (pause)

Since you are the kind of person who votes faithfully and who is always there for your church, we wanted to remind you about the election on Nov 3rd. This election has very high stakes and will impact which roads get paved, which schools get new books, and even which hospitals are shut down.

Can we count on your vote on Nov. 3th?

Great! We are calling people from __[CHURCH NAME]__ and it looks like a lot of people will be voting this year. It is an exciting race, but it’s going to be close and your vote can make the difference.

Are you planning to vote by mail, vote early in person, or vote on election day? (pause)

Voting by mail is very easy, and you can request your ballot during church services this Sunday. Then your ballot will be mailed right to your door.

[INSERT SENTENCE ON EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS AND HOURS – CHECK WITH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS]

I have that your polling place is at __[POLLING PLACE]__. Is that close enough to walk? Or will you drive or take the bus? (pause)

On November 3rd, your polling place is open from 7AM TO 7PM. Do you know when you might go to vote? In the morning, afternoon, evening? (pause) So do you think you'll head to the polling place from your home, work, or somewhere else?

Great! Again, thank you for being a faithful voter, and for your promise to vote this year.

Finally, I want to let you know that Pastor __[NAME]__ wants to thank everyone who votes in this election by publishing your name in the church bulletin.

We hope to be able to thank you again for voting on Tuesday, November 3th.

8. Phone Script #2 – for new voters

Hello, is __[VOTER NAME]__ there?

Hi! This is __[CALLER NAME]__ calling from __[CHURCH NAME]__.

Pastor __[PASTOR NAME]__ asked me to call all the members of our congregation who recently registered to vote to say thank you for becoming a new voter.

This election has very high stakes and will impact which roads get paved, which schools get new books, and even which hospitals are shut down.

Can we count on your vote on Nov. 3th?

Great! We are calling people from __[CHURCH NAME]__ and it looks like a lot of people will be voting this year. It is an exciting race, but it's going to be close and your vote can make the difference.

Are you planning to vote by mail, vote early in person, or vote on election day? (pause)

Voting by mail is very easy, and you can apply for it in church this Sunday. Then your ballot will be mailed right to your door.

[INSERT SENTENCE ON EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS AND HOURS – CHECK WITH COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS]

I have that your polling place is at __[POLLING PLACE]__. Is that close enough to walk? Or will you drive or take the bus? (pause)

On November 3th, your polling place is open from 7AM TO 7PM. Do you know when you might go to vote? In the morning, afternoon, evening? (pause) So do you think you'll head to the polling place from your home, work, or somewhere else?

Great! Again, thank you for being a faithful voter, and for your promise to vote this year.

Finally, I want to let you know that Pastor __[NAME]__ wants to thank everyone who votes in this election by publishing your name in the church bulletin.

We hope to be able to thank you for voting on Tuesday, November 3th. Good bye!

9. Important Dates and Polling Locations

October 5, 2020

Last day to Register to Vote for the November election

October 19 – November 1, 2020

Mandatory Early Voting Period

October 24, 2020

Deadline for Supervisors of Elections to receive vote by mail requests

November 3, 2020

Election Day and deadline for receipt of Vote By Mail ballots

Pinellas County Polling Locations

- SPC Allstate Center 3200 34th St. S, St. Petersburg
- Supervisor of Elections Office - County Courthouse 315 Court St., Room 117, Clearwater
- Supervisor of Elections Office - Election Service Center Starkey Lakes Corporate Center, 13001 Starkey Rd., Largo
- Supervisor of Elections Office - County Building 501 First Ave. N., St. Petersburg
- The Centre of Palm Harbor 1500 16th St., Palm Harbor

Hillsborough County Polling Locations

- Amalie Arena 401 Channelside Dr, Tampa
- Apollo Beach Recreation Center 664 Golf and Sea Blvd, Apollo Beach
- Austin Davis Public Library 17808 Wayne Rd, Odessa
- Bloomingdale Regional Public Library 1906 Bloomingdale Ave, Valrico
- Bruton Memorial Library 302 W McLendon St, Plant City
- C Blythe Andrews Jr Public Library 2607 E Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Tampa

- Fred B Karl County Center 601 E Kennedy Blvd, Tampa
- Platt Regional Library 3910 S Manhattan Ave, Tampa
- Jimmie B Keel Regional Public Library 2902 W Bearss Ave, Tampa
- Maureen B Gauzza Public Library 11211 Countryway Blvd, Tampa
- New Tampa Regional Library 10001 Cross Creek Blvd, Tampa
- North Tampa Branch Library 8916 N Blvd, Tampa
- Northdale Recreation Center 15550 Spring Pine Dr, Tampa
- Northwest Elections Office 4575 Gunn Hwy, Tampa
- Port Tampa Community Center 4702 W McCoy St, Tampa
- Providence West Community Center 5405 Providence Rd, Riverview
- Port Tampa Community Center 4702 W McCoy St, Tampa
- Providence West Comm. Center 5405 Providence Rd, Riverview
- Raymond James Stadium (voting entrance – Himes Ave.) 4201 N Dale Mabry Hwy, Tampa
- Riverview Branch Library 10509 Riverview Dr, Riverview
- Robert L Gilder Elections Service Center 2514 N Falkenburg Rd, Tampa
- Southeast Elections Office 10020 S US Hwy 301, Riverview
- SouthShore Regional Library 15816 Beth Shields Way, Ruskin
- Temple Terrace Public Library 202 Bullard Pkwy, Temple Terrace
- Town 'N Country Regional Public Library 7606 Paula Dr, Tampa
- University Area Community Center 14013 N 22nd St, Tampa
- USF TECO Hall (David C Anchin Center) 4110 USF Apple Dr, Tampa
- West Tampa Branch Library 2312 W Union St, Tampa

Polk County Early Voting Locations

- Bartow: Polk Street Community Center: 1255 Polk St, Bartow, FL 33830
- Davenport: Polk County Sheriffs NE District Office, 1100 Dunson Rd, Davenport, FL
- Haines City: Haines City Library, 111 N 6th St, Haines City, FL 33844
- Lakeland: Polk County Government Center, 930 E Parker St, Lakeland, FL 33801
- Lakeland: Simpson Park Community Center, 1725 Martin L King Jr Ave, Lakeland, FL 33805
- Lake Wales: James P. Austin Community Center, 315 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd N, Lake Wales, FL 33853
- Mulberry: Mulberry Civic Center, 901 NE 5th St, Mulberry, FL 33860
- Poinciana: Poinciana Community Center, 395 Marigold Ave, Poinciana, FL 34759
- Winter Haven: Gill Jones NE Polk County Government Center, 3425 Lake Alfred Rd