

Political Unfaithfulness

Let us turn to our Bibles to Hosea chapter 8. Hosea chapter 8 verses 8 through 14. Hosea chapter 8 verses 8 and following. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

The King of Princes. In these words, Lord, we read of continued, as we had throughout the rest of the book of Hosea, continued unfaithfulness by the northern tribes in particular, and that they insist upon doing their own thing in worshiping Baal and Astarte, God, in the name of the Lord even, and for that, God, you will bring judgment upon them. But also here, as we see in particular, their political unfaithfulness, that they went to the Gentiles, to the Syrians and the like, God, to get protection instead of going to you, as they are called.

So, Lord God Almighty, we see an intertwining both of political and religious unfaithfulness in the Old Testament Church and Old Testament nation. Gracious God and Savior, may we pray, learn the lesson here, and try to be politically faithful in accordance to your will, knowing certainly, God, we will fall short, for we are indeed sinners, God Almighty, but especially to be faithful religiously, always following our Lord and Savior and his pure worship instead of man-made honor of your name. In these things we pray by the blood of Christ.

Amen. So a supporting theme of Hosea and other prophets is Israel's political unfaithfulness. That they sought out military cooperation with foreign nations was an ongoing problem when the Lord with the Lord and the Lord God told them not to do this.

And that is the difference between our time and theirs, or one of the differences. We have not been given such a restriction. We are not given a special promise that the Lord will work miracles and the like for our nation or any nation.

In that sense, Israel was special and we are not. On the other hand, Israel was just like us. They needed men to fight and wise leaders to lead.

And we see that over and over again in Kings and Chronicles that they actually went to battle. That the Lord was their warrior didn't mean they didn't fight. Just they had to fight in God's terms, in other words.

So neither of these are different between then and now as well. We too need leaders. We too need men to fight if the circumstances warrant it.

We don't expect miracles. And so we have to work through providential means that God has given us, the practical means. Let's see how Israel was not practicing civic righteousness in this case and the Lord's punishment upon them in the lessons for us today.

Political Unfaithfulness Described

So the first point here as I break it up, verses 8 through 10, political unfaithfulness as described by the prophet. Now there's a little segue, a sliding between verses 7 and 8. As you know, the verse distinctions are artificial more or less. They're trying to guess what they think the context here.

And we see this idea of swallowing up prosperity. In verse 7, they sold the wind and reaped the whirlwind. I preached on that last week.

And part of the consequences that they reaped and their unfaithfulness before the Lord is that their prosperity as pictured by the stock that has no bud and it shall never produce meal. And if it does produce, verse 7, aliens would swallow it up. Israel is swallowed up.

So it slides in to that idea here. And he starts talking about the Gentiles. They're among the Gentiles.

They've gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey seeking help from pagans instead of from God. So they're playing on the idea here of swallowing up by foreigners in this case. Israel being swallowed up, not just their prosperity, but all of the entirety of the nation.

And indeed that happens in the fall of Samaria in 722. Israel will indeed be completely consumed. So it's a hint at that here.

But it's also part of a broader description of punishment by aliens. That is, of course, foreigners. It's an old word.

I don't think we use it. I guess we have the Aliens Act still in politics today. Mentioned several times in Deuteronomy and the chapters there at the end of the book on the curses of the covenant for Israel.

Even without those explicit curses, I've gone through those when I went through Deuteronomy in the Wednesday night's Bible study. Even without those explicit curses there and here, being invaded and overrun by foreign population is certainly not what anybody wants. We don't want to lose our culture.

We don't want to lose our language. We don't want to lose our nation. And so it's a bad thing anyway.

Of course here, it's doubly bad because the nation itself is in a covenant. The rest of us are not as God's people in the Old Testament. For the good of the church, in fact.

That's how God designed it. But they don't want anything to do with that. So the God says, fine.

I mean, you're gonna be swallowed up. You're gonna be disciplined. You're gonna be consumed.

You're gonna lose your nation. And indeed they do. Now they are among the nations, it continues here in verse 8, like a vessel in which is no pleasure.

That is, they're among the Gentiles in a bad way. Not in a good way. Their public association is evidence of their unfaithfulness and that they will only bring a lack of displeasure.

That is judgment. They're like a vessel in which is no pleasure. Like trying to drink something and it tastes nasty.

That's what's gonna happen with Syria and Israel trying to cooperate together when they shouldn't be. It's gonna be bad for both, but especially for Israel. And that continues on and God's using the words of the prophet to warn and describe the dangers of political unfaithfulness to the Old Testament Church.

For they have gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey alone by itself. So it's a picture of a sorry donkey, a picture of a sad deserted animal alone by itself, walking up to Assyria to seek for assistance. So the donkey is Ephraim.

And there's a play on words here. You don't know the Hebrew, of course, between donkey and Ephraim. You're not acting like the best you could be, Ephraim, which is, right, the center, the hub of Samaria for the northern tribes.

So it's a shorthand for all the ten tribes up north. You are unfaithful and you're like a sad pathetic animal walking through the desert, almost like in a pleading sense, begging for the northern empire, Assyria, to help them or not to beat them up anyways. That's the idea here.

Hosea, King Hosea with an H, is going to Assyria as a vassal in 2nd Kings 17, as a matter of fact. Israel's told not to rely upon foreigners. Deuteronomy 17, you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy on them, nor shall you make a marriage with them.

You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. He says it again in Isaiah 30 verse 1. Where are the rebellious children, says the Lord, who take counsel, but not of me, and who devise plans, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin upon sin, who walk to go down to Egypt, who have not asked my advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. So there, the warning is don't go back to Egypt to get protection from them.

They're not seeking out my advice, Isaiah says. And the same with here, the northern tribes, Hosea, you saw in 2nd Kings 17, and the like, insist on doing it their way, and getting the kind of help they want to get. When God had told them explicitly in Deuteronomy, and elsewhere in Exodus as well, and the prophets bring it up again and again, don't go the way of the pagans when it comes to protecting your nation.

I'm going to protect you. Trust me. So God had designed it that way on purpose, to teach them the lesson of faith.

On a national level, right? On a national level. So it's one thing to trade goods with them, and they did, and we have lots of examples of that. They did it in the desert, as you recall, when they left Egypt.

But it's another thing to make a covenant with the Gentiles, to join them, as we say, at the hip. To be joined at the hip. Which is what was going on here, over and over again.

And he continues on with this theme, and this warning, this description, implicitly a warning as well, here in the opening ones, becomes more explicit with punishment, in verses 13 and 14. To describe this relationship with Assyria and other nations, as one who has hired lovers. So now he's mixing the metaphor of political unfaithfulness there, with the idea of having hired lovers, and breaking the marriage vow, as he brought up in chapter 1, 2, and 3 of Hosea, as we all know.

And so this is a perpetual political problem with them. As far back as the early kings, the 2nd Chronicles 16, for example. 2nd Chronicles 16, when the north and the south are fighting again.

The northern tribes fighting the two southern tribes. King Asa of the south, was otherwise a godly king. The text tells us that.

This was a godly man, following the footsteps of Solomon, or David. Going back to the way of Solomon, as it were. But, even so, such a man as himself, he feared men, instead of fearing God.

And so King Asa, out of that fear, relied upon Ben Hadad of Syria. Ben Hadad is mentioned again, because the Syrians had a number of Ben Hadad kings. They're all just named that for a while.

And he goes to Syria, and asks for help. Well, in 2nd Chronicles 16, we have a prophet, a seer. Verse 7, and at that time, Hanani, the seer, came to Asa, king of Judah, and said to him, because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand.

Were the Ethiopians and the Lubyans not a huge army, with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand. Verse 9, for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to him. In this you have done foolishly.

Therefore, from now on, you shall have wars. You thought you were gonna stop a war with the north. By hiring the Syrian king, Ben-Hadad, to distract the northern king in their combat, in their battles.

And it did, it was distracted, and they went up north, and left the southern tribes alone, and the southern tribes ran across the border, destroyed one of the cities, and rebuilt it as their own fortification. Read that there in, what is it, 1st Kings, I think 13 or 14. It worked out in the short term, but God said in the long term, you're gonna keep having wars the rest of your kingship.

Fighting, and skirmishes, and battles. That's God's punishment upon them. So they have this unique special relationship.

That they are supposed to rely upon God, as my old mentor liked to say, as their own nuclear power. We have nukes, we have missiles, we have armies, and we ought to, because

that's the world we live in. We don't have miracles and promises from God, and prophets, that he will be our nuke.

But they were given that in the Old Testament explicitly, by men who showed signs and wonders, and in Deuteronomy and the like. Explicitly in the black letter commandments of God. And so he will gather them for judgment.

Yea, though they have heart among the nations. So they're the idea of hiring again. These lovers are of course the nations.

Now I will gather them, and they shall sorrow a little, because the burden of the king of the princes. In other words, Israel's leadership has hired out the help from the Gentiles, and God will gather them together, and the Gentiles, the king of the princes, because he led the armies, the the Syrian king did in this case. As a further judgment, even if that judgment is only for a little bit, but still it's a real judgment nevertheless, in verse 10.

Now modern nations, as I said a number of times, and I'm going to go a little more detail here, don't have this same kind of relationship with God and his will for us. There is no special nation. America is not special that way.

Canada isn't special. Japan isn't special. Any other nation, Germany, whatever, Israel, you know, it's not special anymore.

They don't have that unique covenant relationship they had under Moses in the land, which itself was a, what, a type and a foreshadow of heaven itself. And all the types of the foreshadows are fulfilled in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. It's done with, done away with.

America is not chosen that way, but they can still be politically unfaithful insofar as what? They break God's commandments. The Ten Commandments are not only applicable for individuals, not only applicable for families, but they are given to nations, to the magistrate, to exercise and to use. And in this case, and so far as, well, I guess suppose one example here would be nations outsourcing their job as their leaders in their army, using foreign armies to fight for us instead of our own armies, for example, not doing the job to take care of their own citizens and the like.

That would be their unfaithfulness. That would be them hiring out lovers politically across the world or wherever their case may be. Not doing their duty and responsibility as our leaders.

Yet like early America, there can be a day of fasting and prayer to ask for help during times of national difficulties and troubles. Yes, we don't have the promise of God being our nuclear bomb. That's true.

But God still tells us to what? Pray, and if the situation is serious enough, to fast, to have days of fasting, to have national days of fasting. The unbelievers have done that historically. They cry out to their gods, and we saw that, of course, with Elijah at Mount Carmel, and they cut themselves.

They're showing how dedicated they are, how serious they are about getting this miracle to prove Elijah wrong. But fasting is a natural act, a responsible act. The Continental Congress, as you recall, perhaps in your history class, gave such a call in the 1700s during our Revolutionary War era, and they called for a national day of fasting and prayer.

And that national day of fasting and prayer, which you can find online, or I can give you a copy, included the name of Jesus Christ. It's a wonderful thing to read our history and realize how much Christianity was there, how much our nation was used, and God's and Jesus Christ's mediatorial reign, as I heard this morning, to protect and preserve the churches of North America, and America in particular. We are not Israel.

That's true. Nevertheless, nations still need God. They still need to cry out to him individually and collectively for his help and to work to that end.

Indeed, all of us should work to that end, beginning, of course, with our own families and our own churches. That leads us here to the second point, the religious unfaithfulness rebuked, verses 11 to 13.

Religious Unfaithfulness Rebuked

The religious sins, again, are intertwined with political unfaithfulness here, and a reminder, again, that God Almighty told them not to mix these things up.

And we see here, in verses 11 through 13, yeah, you see the religious part, right? Altars, temples, verse 14, for example. So you may be tempted to think, well, he's just talking merely, more precisely, of religion, an airtight category the Americans typically think of it. Well, here's religion, and here's politics.

I think you know by now, thousands of years, and all the nations across the world, the two are very close together. Yes, they're obviously distinct conceptually, but in practice, they overlap a lot. And the same is here.

So verses 11 to 13, I don't believe we should read as just simply, oh, there they are. God's worried about their false worship here, and over here he's worried about their unfaithful political activities, and the like, and going out to pagan and Gentile nations for protection instead of me. But rather, them joining at the hip with these foreign nations has influence and affected negatively their worship towards God.

They are the bad influence that has made the false worship. And I'll give you this example. First of all, another text to remind us, to show us again, that God is very serious about this.

Exodus 34. Exodus 34, 12, we read, Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you're going, lest it be a snare in your midst. Becomes a snare.

Lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods, and make sacrifices to their gods, and one of them invites you, and you eat of a

sacrifice. That was the biggest danger right there. Verse 16, You take of his daughters for your sons, and the daughters play the harlot with their gods, and make your sons play the harlots with their gods.

And where's the first incident we see that most strikingly in the Old Testament? If you remember Wednesday night, who was the king when Elijah was here? Ahab. And who was his wife? The Philistine Jezebel. And that's why he made that temple to Baal there in Samaria.

And so thus we have the full completion of the false worship of the northern tribes, excuse me, of that time. Because they made this political alliance with these foreign kings, and brought in the false worship of Baal. And Jezebel was the head of that, just like they prophesied.

God warned them in Exodus 34 against such a matter. So that was especially why God highlighted that, because of that concern and the danger of false worship at the end of the day. So, these altars for sin then, have their roots historically in their unfaithfulness, political unfaithfulness in this case.

So the altars for sin, I take it here when you read this in verse 11, because Ephraim has many altars for sin. Perhaps it's given and spoken in the ironic sense. Again, not as though they were looking to have altars that were sinful, but they ended up being sinful anyways.

And so he's showing the foolishness of this. People don't typically rationalize and say, God is fine with sin. What they do is they say, I'm not sinning.

That's what they say. That's what they do with themselves, and convince themselves of these things, both Christians and unbelievers. And so these become therefore a means towards more sin.

Because he has made many altars for sin, naturally they become to him altars for sinning. Compounding the sin, and more sin, and violations and transgressions of God's holy worship. It emboldens them for more sin, unfortunately.

They had the altars before the temple era, of course, era. Abraham had an altar before the Lord, and praised God on top of it. But they were used rightly to honor him.

Now they have Baal, the name of the Lord. They have the high places, and they have their own temple up north in Samaria, instead of Jerusalem. And of course, they also have the temple prostitutes.

So it just kept compounding, and growing, and becoming worse up north. God will not be mocked, and therefore he will use foreign powers to punish them. You thought the foreign powers were going to help you, and support you, and strengthen you, Ahab? Guess what? Esau, guess what? It's going to make it worse for you.

Strangers to truth, verse 12, I have written for them the great things of my law. The holy law of our Lord God Almighty. Not just the Ten Commandments, but all that he has given them,

and the worship in particular, of course, because we're talking about reading here, altars, and sacrifices, and temples.

They are great, and mighty, and wonderful things. But they were considered a strange thing. What is this? I don't know what this is.

It's quite a rebuke, brothers and sisters. It's imagining having a best friend, who eventually just thinks of you as a stranger. Like, well, I don't know.

What's the big? Who are you again? What's going on here? I don't understand what's so great about our relationship again. Because, of course, the law expressed their relationship. Do you love God? You will keep my commandments.

That's true, not only in the New Testament, but also in the Old Testament. And so, as though they have been forgotten. They have forgotten the Lord God.

We see that phrase used over, and over again in the prophets. They have forgotten one sense, but another sense they haven't, is they simply just don't want to follow the Lord. They've traipsed off with some other no-good bum.

Israel did that collectively. To Baal, to Ashtaroth, and other false gods, and false worship. They were blessed with the Word of God.

It was a great and wonderful thing to have. The great things of my law, the Lord God says. Both spoken at Mount Sinai, and written down by Moses.

The priests had knowledge as well, and should have perpetuated, and had for a while. But by generation, after generation, they threw it away. And so, this generation is a strange thing to them.

To learn of the Deuteronomic Code. What is this? We're supposed to really do, what? They had their own traditions already. One generation after another, growing.

And they have their own worship in the New Testament. They think, they all, northern tribes, excuse me, and they think, and they hear Hosea, they hear Isaiah, they hear Elijah, and Elisha. You guys are speaking strange things to us.

What are you talking about? It's a very sad state, to be sure. Today, we have a similar thing, unfortunately. We have the greatness of the things in his law.

Yes, the Deuteronomic Code, insofar as it goes to the temple, it goes to the priesthood, it goes to the sacrifice, it's done away with. The book of Hebrews says that very clearly. It's all gone.

But the moral law is the same. It is great and mighty, because it reflects the holiness of our God and Savior. And yet, so many, unfortunately, so many consider God's law a strange thing in American Christianity.

You've heard the numbers. I won't say them again. They can't even name the Ten Commandments.

We have access to the Word of God. Families have multiple, physical, tangible Bibles. They have digital Bibles.

They have it on their phone. Everywhere they go, there it is. The greatness of God and his law, and of course, his gospel.

But they were considered a strange thing. Something odd. What is this? Perhaps a novelty.

I've never heard that before. Brothers and sisters, ignorance is a terrible thing. It seems to have grown.

The more we had the Bible, the more ignorance we seem to have in America. Like inverse relationship. May we help one another to learn and to read, not take the Bible for granted, the law of God, of course, which is what is said here explicitly, and certainly the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To learn more of his will, and to help brothers and sisters. Not to look down upon them. Oh, you're not reformed.

You don't know the Bible. They need help. They need prayer.

And perhaps we need it as well. Rejected worship. Verse 13.

The conclusion of the matter is, for the sacrifices of my offerings, they sacrifice flesh and eat on it. But the Lord does not, what? Accept them. He will not take them.

He is not honored by their sacrifices, their public worship. And I think it's rejected in twofold fashion. One by form, and the other by substance.

By form, I mean the actual act itself, the outward act of taking the animal, going in the altar, getting a priest, doing it at the temple, all that. And of course, in the northern tribes, they have their own priests, their own altars, their own temple. It's all wrong.

All the outward forms are wrong. Blatantly wrong. Ridiculously wrong.

You can't get away from it. You're supposed to go to Jerusalem. God wanted a worship according to his will, and not man's.

But Rehoboam, the king of the north, Jeroboam, no, Jeroboam, the king of the north, Rehoboam, the king of the south. Jeroboam, the king of the north, was very clear about this. He didn't want them going to Jerusalem, so he made up a whole nother religion.

Not completely a whole nother. It's very similar to the Old Testament, the other southern tribes, excuse me, and a very much bizarro fashion. But there we are.

So the forms were exactly rejected, clearly against the black-letter commandments of God's law. But especially the substance God rejects. The intent behind the sacrifice was often insincere.

They said with their lips, as we saw last week, we are yours, God. We're one of yours. Don't punish us.

We're in covenant with you. We know you. Don't you know us? But their hearts were far from him.

That's especially what he wants, their hearts. And they didn't want to give it. Instead, with their lips, they talked about Baal and Ashtoreth and Jehovah all in the same breath.

And God Almighty, he is not satisfied with that. He is not happy. He rejects it.

He will punish them for it. Something is seriously wrong with the northern tribes, and God is going to bring judgment upon them. And that brings us to verses 13 to 14.

13b. Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins, and they shall return to Egypt. So the foreign power is now going to be their ensnarement and punishment upon them, and they will be crushed by them.

God's patience has an end, is what we are reading here. When we read, now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. And of course, remember doesn't mean God forgot.

It means to be brought up again with respect to us and our sins or Israel and their punishments. It's a language of anthropomorphic or anthropathy with respect to emotions and human conditions to use to describe God's actions towards us. The punishment, of course, comes here.

And for the unjust, if they repent not, God will punish them. For the just, that is God's people, if they repent not, God will punish them. But the punishment is different.

One is the judge, and the other is the father. Here it is perhaps both, because the Old Testament Church, like the New Testament Church, is a mixed multitude in which those in the church, some are his people, some believe with the heart, others do not. It's just outward forms and actions, and they don't really trust in God.

Depending on what we have even today, if Jesus Christ is not our Lord, and we trust in our baptism, we trust in our church membership, we trust in our obedience and the like, and not in our Lord and Savior, then the punishment upon us is a punishment of a judge instead of a father. So here, again, it depends on the state of any individual Jew of this time. But in general, of course, it affects all of us.

We're all one body. And if enough sin is going on, as we see in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians 5, for example, God's going to punish the entire church to wake them up. You're supposed to help one another, fight sin, and not make excuses and fall asleep at the wheel.

And so the churches and church leaders, we need to know what's going on in the body of Christ and church members as well, if it's especially a public sin, to deal with it and deal with it quickly. The reasons for the judgment, verse 14, for Israel has forgotten his maker and has built temples. Judah also has multiplied fortified cities.

And in response to that, God says there at the end of verse 14, But I will send fire upon the cities, and it shall devour the palaces. It's all going to go up in smoke. And the reasons for the judgment, verse 14, is again this flipside of verse 13.

I will remember, he will remember, God will bring up again their sins for punishment's sake. But on the flipside, for Israel has what? Forgotten his maker. Over here, God's remembering.

Over here, Israel's forgetting. So we see this metaphor, this picture in contrast to one another. If you forget God, God will not forget your sins.

And again, in the context of being one of his children, it says a father, so you will be punished by him because he loves you. It may be literal in terms of the punishment. Each generation grows in their own lies of wickedness and layering half-truths upon half-truths and the like here, that God will bring forgetfulness upon them.

That is literal in the sense that they've forgotten over the generations of the half-truths layering on top of other half-truths and the like. Who is the Lord God? I don't know anymore, but I think he has a consort named Ashtoreth, which is what we dug up. I keep thinking about it.

It's absolutely incredible. We found that kind of stuff going on in the archaeology because that was what was going on back then. It's real.

Israel actually did these things, and we have physical evidence outside the Word of God, but the Word of God is sufficient. But they're forgetting this twofold here. Religious, we see expressed here religiously by building temples, places of worship, clearly not temples of Jehovah, their own places of worship.

There's only supposed to be one place of worship, and that was in Jerusalem. It was already built. And then politically, they do what? They multiply fortified cities to protect themselves from their enemies instead of trusting in God Almighty.

So you have here both themes brought back together in one verse, religious unfaithfulness and political unfaithfulness. That's their forgetfulness in their actions that expresses this. And God, of course, is going to bring judgment upon them, for they have sinned.

Today we have a similar problem in the American situation, although not exactly the same. Again, the Jews, all the Jews were Jews politically, and they're also all Jews religiously. They both wore the same hat.

In America, that's not the case. Lots of us are American, but not Christian. Nevertheless, the best parallel we have is we have lots of false worship in America.

In fact, we have Hindu temples and Hindu statues. Statues in Texas. I think it was Texas.

Crazy, 90-foot tall statues of Hindu gods. Politically, our leaders and parties are very arrogant, thinking they can fix all kinds of problems without repentance and faith in our Lord and Savior. They can fix some things.

I'm thankful for that, right? We talked about that this morning. I want a helpful magistrate to protect the church. That's good.

They do all kinds of other things. Very, very arrogant, like the Jews of old, thinking they're somehow special and nobody can touch them, and they can get away with these things. But God is the final judge.

The punishment here, fire to consume Israel. I think this is both literal in terms of sieging a city, attacking it, burning it to the ground, but also figurative for war in general. All the destruction that comes upon us through war, God's judgment using war, will have and come upon them in such pain and misery that all that they build, all that they depend upon, the false temples and the multiplied fortified cities, they will be consumed by fire.

And God punishes nations as well today as we know. They have war. We have it in the Middle East.

We have it in Eastern Europe. We have unrest. We had it here in America, unfortunately, last week and the like.

These things are not good things. They are bad things. And there are bad things to remind us that God punishes sin even here and now.

Not fully, but enough. The point is to wake people up, to show them this world is limited. This world has fallen.

There's something better. We know there should be something better. This is all wrong.

You got to find the Lord God Almighty and repent of your sins as individuals, as communities, and as nations. That's why we see these things come upon us. What to do? Here, the last point.

Political Religious Unfaithfulness Punished

These and other verses are wake-up calls, obviously, by the Prophet to his audience and to us today always, to repent, to return to the good works that God has given us in his word, by his strength and his spirit. The same is true today with an additional reminder, of course, that being in politics isn't necessarily wrong and that it's good to be a good citizen and to work and to have faithful politics. Faithful politics does not mean that every question of politics has an immediate clear answer in the Ten Commandments, for example.

We can just disagree over specific applications in terms of what it means to be applying God's will to our political situation in your neighborhood, for example. Speed limit is a political question because it has to go past through a law, doesn't it? That's all I'm saying. So I do want to make it careful that we don't think, you know, one approach to politics is the only approach.

Now, that's true with respect to the clear commandments of God's law. Murder, lying, stealing, assassinations, these things are wrong and should be punished and stopped at all costs, if possible, politically. With force and might.

That's why God gave the sword to the state. To stop these things, to bring the fear of God upon people and to exercise justice and do it speedily, not through 14 infractions until they stab someone in the neck. That's not political faithfulness.

That's political unfaithfulness. That's true. And it may never be fixed.

And so we should not fall into the frustration of always just fretting and worrying about our political situation. I do want to avoid that as well, brothers and sisters. But in the context of this text, clearly he's talking about unfaithful political action.

And we don't have the exact same thing, but we have God's law. That's the exact same thing. They were still supposed to follow God's law, even then.

And we are called to do that. But above all, brothers and sisters, keep ourselves unspotted from the world and to keep his worship pure, always depending upon him. Indeed, God Almighty, we're thankful for this reminder and warning of the political aspects here.

And the danger of false worship tied to that false reliance upon foreign powers. Our God, our situation is exactly the same today to be sure. But we still have the admonition and warning for ourselves to have faithful and pure worship, pure doctrine of the Word of God, the great law of the Ten Commandments.

And Lord, to always follow you to know that certainly we will struggle and that things will not be perfect. We'll not have a paradise in America, God, but we can do what we can. We pray that your spirit would be upon us and upon our leaders to maintain peace and security for the church especially.

We pray these things. Amen.