

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

September 24, 2020

My dear Friends:

As of today, we are forty days out from Election Day. Of course, with so many doing mail-in or absentee ballots, our national election will be more slow-rolling and unfolding than is typical every four years. Still, it is a good marker for where we are in our national life at just this moment.

It is a great privilege in our American system of government to be able to vote. We are mindful that it wasn't until 1920 women were allowed to vote and wasn't until 1965 all the barriers were taken away for African Americans to vote. And so, we do not and should not take voting for granted.

That said, I do not think there is a biblical requirement for Christians to vote. After all, when Paul wrote Romans 13, no one was voting for Nero—government didn't work that way. Likewise, when the Westminster Divines wrote our Confession of Faith, no one voted for the king or Oliver Cromwell either; and while members of parliament were voted upon by “the people,” it was actually a remarkably small portion of the population who voted in the 1640s. We can't tease out a mandate from the Bible to vote in a national election.

In fact, there might be times when a Christian decides he cannot or will not vote, when he or she makes a principled decision not to exercise their right and privilege because they do not want to participate in evil, or they cannot vote for any of the offered candidates in good conscience.

I mention all of this because it is vital we extend liberty to each other on political matters. In fact, our Confession of Faith stresses that “God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men” (WCF 21:2). That means God in Jesus Christ is your Lord; to him, you stand or fall (Rom 14:8-12). If you choose to vote for a major-party candidate, a third-party candidate, or not at all, that is a decision you must make before God. And it is a decision neither I nor others should judge—we should extend grace and charity, liberty, to each other to exercise our consciences before the Lord as he leads us to do.

But we should always be ready to pray for rulers and authorities, for the election, for our national unrest, for justice (1 Tim 2:1-2). Many will be joining the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in praying this coming Saturday; others in our city are setting aside every third day of the month to pray; still others are praying together at the same time each day. Let's pray together that God would still our raging national storm; that he will ensure the election is done fairly, justly, constitutionally; that he will take away the profound and pervasive spirit of fear we feel on every side; and that he would continue to give space for the preaching of the Gospel.

I'm praying that we will continue to know the peace, purity, and unity Jesus gives to his church as we ride the stormy seas of our national moment. May God grant this to us!

In the grip of God's grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.