

*“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21*

## **Welcome Visitors!**

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate. Thank You**

## **Schedule**

### **The Lord's Day**

9:30 AM Classes

Auditorium: Fellowship

Room 13/14: Jesus in the Gospel of John

Room 17 – Young Adults Class (18-29)

10:30 AM Assembly

Speaking today: David Posey

*High Noon at Gabbatha*

2 PM Class at the Building

James (Room 13/14)

5 PM (building)

Sermon On The Mount

Weekly Young Adults Class

Class at Posey's: 5 PM

**Tuesday 10 AM**

The Fruit of the Spirit

**Wednesday, 7 PM**

**No classes: Singing**

**Men's Saturday Morning Meeting**

7 AM, second Saturday of the month

(see Tyler Wade)

## **Information**

### **Website & Online Presence**

Visit our website at [www.folsomchurch.com](http://www.folsomchurch.com) for updates and material on current and past classes, and recorded sermons and classes. You will also find a directory of churches on page one. If you are a member of the church here at Folsom, see one of the deacons or elders to inquire about access to the password -protected members section. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

### **Classes & Home Studies**

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

### **Restrooms**

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

### **For Small Children**

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

### **View & Junior View**

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly to our member list and hard copies are printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

# Politics

by David Posey

Jesus, a perfectly innocent man, was crucified between two thieves, in the most appalling case of injustice ever perpetrated by a government. What happened to Jesus is pretty simple: he ran headfirst into a bunch of politicians.

The Jewish politicians trumped up charges against Jesus because they supposed he was out to grab their political influence. John 11:48 makes this clear,

If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

The high priest, Caiaphas, amends that to add that it's better if they terminate him; that way, they could assure their continued control over the people (John 11:49-50).

The Roman governor of Judea, Marcus Pontius Pilate, was also a shrewd politician. You didn't become a governor of anything if you didn't prove your political savvy to those who were in charge of assigning people to leadership roles. We see his political side at its worst in the trial of Jesus. The charges against Jesus were patently false and he knew it. Three times, in John 18-19, he says "I find no guilt in the man." To his eternal shame, he chose political correctness over doing the right thing. Jesus' brother would say, later, "to him who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him, it is sin" (James 4:17).

A politician, technically, is simply someone (usually) elected to office, a professional practitioner of "politics," a word used to describe the activities associated with the governance of a nation or some part of it. But the term "politician" is often used in unflattering ways these days. For example, the Urban Dictionary defines a politician as (1) a person who practices politics. "Politics" is derived from the words "poly" meaning "many" and "tics" meaning "blood-sucking parasites." (2) One who has perfected the art of lying. (3) A highly paid "yes-man." Though there are exceptions, it's hard to

argue with that negative assessment when viewing the political landscape today. It's hard to find a long-time career politician who has not gotten wealthy and even famous in his work of "public service" (to be fair, there *are* some true public servants who happen to be politicians).

But how should Christians view politics and politicians? That's a good question. Before WWII, most Christians were more or less apolitical, and for good reason. First, the Bible doesn't portray early Christians as political beings. They put up with politicians — Jewish and Roman — but there is nothing in the New Testament that suggests Christians should

support a particular politician or political view. The Jews once tried to entrap Jesus and make him declare his allegiance to one state or another. But he befuddled them

with his "*render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's*" (Matthew 22:21).

After WWII, Christians became more politically-minded and, in too many cases, politics began to change the identity of a local church. In many parts of the country, to be a Christian meant you must be a Republican because they were the "moral conservatives" in the world. In progressive, "social justice" churches, "Christian" meant you had to be Democrat because they were thought to be the more compassionate people. There may be a little truth in both of those perceptions but it has resulted in a huge problem for Christianity in America.

To put it bluntly, churches have absolutely no business getting involved in politics at all. And Christians need to be very careful about how they practice their involvement.

There's a reason our founding fathers were careful about separating churches from the state. After all, in Britain, church and state were bound together and our forefathers saw the damage that does to both.

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More importantly, the church that Jesus built was never intended to be a political body. Individual members of the body are to be “salt” and “light,” but the church is never portrayed as a social justice outfit or charged with social engineering of any kind. The church is never ordered to work with a political establishment to carry out its work. Just the opposite. Jesus made it clear when he said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

Many churches have forgotten this — or never embraced it in the first place. Some are simply puppets of the Republican or Democratic parties and politicians spend a fair amount of time trying to please “evangelical associations” or the Al Sharptons of the world. But there is no way to establish a political purpose for the church from the scriptures. Paul said nothing about it other than his words in Romans 13 about being submissive to the government (as long as you don’t compromise your faith). Peter even said, “honor the emperor” (I Peter 2:17) and left it at that. There are a lot of believers who are not anxious to obey Peter on that point right now.

The world of politics is not where Christians live. For one thing, it’s incredibly divisive — suffice to say, generally speaking, Republicans and Democrats do not get along.

But politics is not just a product of the Beltway in Washington, D.C. Politicians are everywhere. I saw it in the business world; I saw Christians I worked with compromise their moral beliefs in order to please the powers-that-be. I heard secretaries who claimed to love God lie through their teeth for their bosses, putting their job ahead of their commitment to truth. Politicians in all lines of work drink and hob nob with those who they feel will boost them up the ladder of success, stepping on fellow workers in the process. They will stab them in the front, if it helps their career.

But worse, politics is especially sickening when it occurs in churches — and it does. You’ll see power-grabs and popularity contests. During a meeting in Alabama, I met an elder

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who was clearly in charge and he didn’t even try to hide it. You could feel the tension during every assembly. This man ran roughshod over the other elders and members in the church. It was his way or the highway and the other elders, to their shame, were afraid to confront him (the preacher, a friend of mine, tried and he got “let go”).

I preached a series of lessons on Leadership there and I noticed that when I made certain points — especially about humility and servanthood, many of the eyes in the church were focused on this man as if to say, “are you hearing this?” That church split sometime after I was there and they let the preacher go. People couldn’t stand it any more. I’ve seen it my whole life.

One elder trying to one-up the others. Preachers currying favor with members to gain their support, mincing their words so people will like him. I saw men trying to undermine other men to gain a foothold with the group; power and control were the prize. I’ve even heard of elders that hid some terrible sins of men in the church because they were big givers.

A politically-minded person is always pandering, seeking to be popular and competing. What you see is not what you get — he changes his tune, depending on the circumstances. He panders to those who can help him make a move up to a higher place.

All this reminds me of Pilate, the politician par excellence. He was a political animal; that was his life. So, when Jesus mentions *truth*, as an absolute thing, Pilate walks away muttering, “what is truth?”

For politicians (as we’re using the term) truth is always relative — it’s a moving target, depending on the particular aims of the individual who is gaming the system. Let’s encourage each other not to have any part in that.

Thank you for listening.