

## *Does My Vote Even Matter?*

For whom should I cast my vote in the 2012 presidential election?

And ... does it even matter? Is there anyone *worth* voting for? If there is, does that candidate stand half a chance?

The cynical part of my brain wants to answer: 1) It doesn't matter. ... 2) See answer 1. ... 3) Probably not. ... and 4) Yeah, right.

Problem is, that cynicism belongs to my old man. He's the remaining unbeliever in me, refusing to recall God's often-surprising sovereignty.

But on my best days, that cynical old codger is silenced by the hope-filled voice of the new man. He's the one who remembers that the Creator of heaven and earth possesses all authority, and He entrusts that authority to whomever He chooses. That means *His* decision is what truly matters – not the cash in the candidates' campaign coffers, the sure-fire predictions of the latest polls, or the prognosis of prattling pundits on CNN, FoxNews, and MSNBC.

It's that new man who recalls how unlikely is our nation's very existence.

The whole enterprise should have ended on a miserable Christmas Eve, as a group of sorry-looking soldiers made a desperate night-time crossing of the Delaware River and a nearly suicidal march across miles of hilly, ice-slicked road. They staked everything on what seemed an insane effort to surprise a band of professional mercenaries in Trenton, N.J.

Any neutral observer would have told them that the attempt would end in tragic defeat. But instead, God allowed Gen. George Washington to rout the Hessian mercenaries and begin to turn the course of the war.

A year later, the whole effort should have collapsed again. Washington and company spent the winter growing weak amidst the squalor of the impoverished and disease-ridden camp at Valley Forge. Meanwhile, the British stayed fat and warm on all of the luxuries available in Philadelphia.

But again, God rescued our nation from a defeat that was all but certain.

Time and again, America should have perished before its birth. It was only by the mercy of God that our nation's fathers persevered to establish a nation built on the premise that "all men are created equal" and "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." They believed that the government's calling is to secure what God has given – and they succeeded by relying not on polls or political experts, but on Him who entrusted so many blessings to them.

That history is important – because it reminds us that God truly is in control.

God has blessed our nation abundantly. He has given us freedom and prosperity unparalleled in history. He has used our nation to strengthen the church throughout the world. *That* is the reason for which America was raised.

Too often, we have misused His gifts. As a nation, we deserve His wrath.

But many are beginning to see the folly of our ways and are exploring anew our nation's need to return to God and to elect Godly leaders. It may be that God will bless those efforts.

Or not.

Either way, our calling is to be faithful stewards of what we have received, striving to elect Godly leaders. Our calling is to support leaders who commit to a government that protects what God has given, rather than transforming government a false god on which the nation relies for meeting its needs.

These are the thoughts on which I've been reflecting since Monday evening, when Grace and I – as well as some other members from the congregation – spent some time hearing what presidential candidate Rick Santorum had to say during a stop in Luverne.

I'll admit: I was impressed by what Mr. Santorum had to say. It seems to me that he understands the most important issues facing our nation, and that he sees what is at stake. He admits that government intervention is not always the solution to our nation's problems – and that government intervention often causes more problems than it fixes. With a 16-year record as a congressman, he understands Washington; and his track record largely shows that he is willing to uphold his oath to support and defend the Constitution.

But then we see the polling numbers and read the remarks of self-proclaimed experts. He may be the most qualified – but those "in the know" say he doesn't stand a chance. A vote for Santorum, they tell us, is a vote wasted.

However, that's precisely the problem: it's not for us to say who will win.

It's our calling to vote for the candidate whom we believe to be the most qualified – not the most popular. It's our calling to seek the most Godly candidate – not the most electable. It's our calling to vote for the one who will be best steward of this nation – not the one who can raise the most money or convince the most professional opinionators.

Our calling is to decide – before God – which candidate is best able to preserve the blessings God has bestowed upon our nation ... and then to pray, acknowledging that the decision, ultimately, belongs to God.

Perhaps God will give four more years to a president whose worldview is fundamentally at odds with the worldview expressed in our Declaration of Independence. If so, that's God's will; and blessed be the name of the Lord.

But it may be that God will raise up someone who will call our nation to see what God has given and to use those blessings in service to God.

Ultimately, whom He raises up is for God alone to decide.

My calling – *our* calling – is to play the part of responsible stewards before God, trusting Him to use our actions in His work to reveal His will for the future of this country. Our calling is to trust Him to turn the future in such a way that it blesses the church and advances the Kingdom of God – regardless of what that means for the United States of America.

Let me encourage you, then, to ignore the polls and the pundits. Take time to evaluate the candidates (for president and for *all* of the offices) according to their wisdom and Godliness, as far as you can discern them. Take part in the process, recalling that God uses His people to influence the course of events.

Then join me in praying that God will bless our nation with a Godly president and Godly legislators who will call the nation to turn back to Him who has given us so many rich blessings!

*For you who live in Minnesota: See you at the Caucuses on Tuesday!*