

Politics and the Cross
Week 2
The Two Kingdoms

Guiding Question: What is the Christian's role in politics?

1. Review

- Politics: the activities associated with the governance of a country or other area, especially the debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve power.
- Cross: Power made perfect in weakness; sacrificial love

Jesus didn't come to answer kingdom of this world questions or solve their problems. Instead, he turned kingdom of this world questions into Kingdom of God answers. Jesus didn't bring a new and improved kingdom, but an all-together different one. In doing so, he refused:

- Political simplicity
- Political complacency
- Political primacy

Application: How do we bring Kingdom of God solutions to kingdom of world problems?

2. The Two Kingdoms

There are two realms – the Spiritual and the Earthly – and God rules over both

- Sacred and Secular
- The Christian is a citizen of two kingdoms at once

Christianity and Culture – The Wrong Approach

- Christianity must change to the culture
- Culture must change to Christianity
- Withdrawal from the World

Two Kingdom Approach

The Christian is in, but not of, the world

- John 17:14-18
- God rules the church through grace and the Gospel
- God rules the world through vocation and the Law

Our relationship to God is based on the Gospel

Our relationship to each other is based on the Law

Christians are free to engage culture, but not uncritically

Confusing the Two

Church can't wage war

- Inquisition
- Holy wars

Government can't rule the church

- Tell it what to preach
- Create a state church

3. Kingdom of the World

God Rules through Law

- Necessary due to sin
- "Rule over you" – Genesis 3:16, 4:7

Romans 13:1-4

- God's intent is to use any given "power over" government as his servant for doing good.
- We are to be good citizens of whatever version of the kingdom of the world we find ourselves in.

Scripture teaches that another cosmic force exists, one that is hostile to God and influences governments to accomplish evil.

- This means no single government or nation is exempt from evil influence or is completely on God's side
- Bottom line: no government or nation or leader or party "ordained by God."

4. Kingdom of God

Different kind of kingdom altogether

- The Mustard Seed kingdom – Matthew 13:31-32
- "Rule Under" – Mark 10:42-45

Jesus didn't argue against or fight the dominant (Roman) system

He just offered a whole new reality – "lived the kingdom"

Examples:

- treatment of women in general
- Samaritan Woman at the Well
- Woman caught in adultery

Participants in the KOW trusts the power of the sword to control behavior

Participants in the KOG trusts the power of self-sacrificial love to transform hearts

Christian is a citizen of both kingdoms simultaneously

As citizens of KOG – we imitate Jesus

As citizens of KOW – we serve through vocation

Contrasting the Two Kingdoms

	Kingdom of God	Kingdom of World
<i>Trusts</i>	Power of the cross Servant of all	Power of the sword (might) Lord over all
<i>Aims</i>	Transform hearts Carrying out God's will	Control behavior Carrying out our will (individually or nationally)
<i>Scopes</i>	Universal	Tribal
<i>Responses</i>	Love your enemies	Vengeance (tit for tat)
<i>Battles</i>	Enemy is now our neighbor Fight spiritual battles	Earthly enemies/conflict

5. Vocation

"In the doctrine of vocation, spirituality is brought down to earth to transfigure our practical, everyday life... In other words, God is graciously at work, caring for the human race through the work of other human beings."¹

In his vocation man does works which effect the well-being of others; for so God has made all offices. Through this work in man's offices, God's creative work goes forward, and that creative work is love, a profusion of good gifts. With persons as his "hands" or "coworkers." God gives his gifts through the earthly vocations, toward man's life on earth (food through farmers, fishermen and hunters; external peace through princes, judges, and orderly powers; knowledge and education through teachers and parents, etc.).²

Luther on Vocation by Gustaf Wingren

Masks of God: A common term in Luther for the means employed by God to perform His work and to make Himself known while remaining hidden.

God bestows his gifts through **means**:

- Spiritual realm – he works through Word and Sacrament
- Earthly realm – he works through Vocation

Purpose of Vocation

"God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does."³

We do not serve God through our works.

He serves us, we serve our neighbors, who in turn serve us.

Luther says that works done only for God or ourselves lose their moral value.

Application: What does my neighbor need? How does that affect my vote?

¹ Gene Edward Veith Jr., *The Spirituality of the Cross: the Way of the First Evangelicals* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia College, 1999), 72.

² Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1994), 27-28

³ Wingren, 10