

AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #127 (by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 10/1/20)

“Reflections on the Not-So-Great Debate”

Sixty seconds into watching the Presidential debate Tuesday, I was ready to turn it off. I didn't though; I kept thinking that the arguing and interrupting really couldn't be as bad as it seemed. I was wrong; it got worse. I felt greatly saddened to see two Presidential candidates arguing like children. When growing up, I was taught that it is rude to interrupt when someone else is talking. I was also taught not to speak ill of people, but to treat everyone with respect, regardless of whether I agreed with them. Sadly, everyone in our nation has not learned those lessons. For many years, I have wished that people running for office would be disqualified for slandering their opponents. Rather, they would only be allowed to speak to the issues and how they would handle them. That may be wishful thinking for all our government leaders, but it should be realistic for Christ-followers. Paul addressed such behavior in this letter to the church in Colossae:

“When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” (Colossians 3:4-10, NIV)

We certainly need to pray for our leaders, but we should not follow their example; we should follow Christ's example. To do this, we must confess our sins, turn away from them, and turn to Christ. When Christ becomes our life, Christ helps us become like him—but we have to let go of and put to death our earthly nature and sinful habits. When we treat others with love and respect, even when we disagree, they see Christ and his love in us—and hopefully are drawn to Christ. And hopefully, then, they, too will want to follow Christ's example. Our lives not reflect the not-so-great debate, but our great God, Jesus Christ, the Lord!

PRAYER:

Loving Lord, forgive me when I let my anger, behavior, or unkind words hurt others and you. Help me to die to my sinful self and put on my new self, my Christ-life. Help me to reflect your love in all I am and do and say! I pray for our nation..., our leaders..., and those who want to be our leader... In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

LIVE IT!

Pray and meditate on Colossians 3:4-10. What is God saying to you? How does God want you to respond? Pray for our nation, our leaders, and all our people.