



What Would Jesus Say?

SERMON NOTES

Week 1 January 8, 2023

“...to our Divided Nation”

Matthew 5:43-45, 22:37-40; James 1:19-20; 26



I. Talking About My Generation

A. This is the first time on our planet that there are _____ generations alive at one time.

- a. *The Greatest Generation* born 1901-1927
- b. *The Silent Generation* born 1928-1945
- c. *The Baby Boom Generation* born 1946-1964
- d. *Generation X* born 1965-1980
- e. *Millennials* born 1981-1996
- f. *Generation Z* born 1997 – early 2010’s

II. The Divided States of America

A. Gen Z and Millennials are deeply concerned about how _____ we are as a nation.

B. Jonathon Haidt, American social psychologist and author, researched the role _____ media plays in dividing us.

C. Jesus was calling people to live differently in that world without directly speaking out against _____ leaders.

III. Lessons from Jesus for Our Divided Nation

A. Throughout the gospels Jesus did what was best for _____.

B. Everybody’s _____ makes perfect sense to him or her.

C. To keep your faith ahead of your politics you need to be a student not a _____.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



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INTRODUCTION

In almost every poll or survey, Millennials and Gen Z participants list our divided nation as one of their top concerns for our nation's future. It's not hard to see how divided our nation is in politics, families, and even the church. So what does Jesus have to say about our divided nation? And how can we work across generational lines to fix it?

Monday: James 3:4-10

Sociologists note that in war, soldiers use dehumanizing nicknames for people on the other side. It seems to become easier to kill people if we stop thinking of them as people, as human. In what ways have you seen similar patterns in religious or political "combat," when the "bullets" are words? Have you ever made friends with a person, then found out you hold some different views, and realized that the derisive labels you've used for "those people" may not be true?

Tuesday: James 4:1-8, 11-12

It is a fact of history that political opponents accused Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt (three fourths of Mount Rushmore!) of being dishonest, trying to destroy freedom, and being guilty of vile personal faults. What can that history teach us when we feel like using, or passing on, similar slurs aimed toward political candidates, business leaders, or even church members or neighbors with whom we disagree?

Wednesday: Ephesians 4:25-32

Scholar N. T. Wright wrote, "People who are enslaved to anger and malice may think they are 'free' to 'be themselves,' but they are in bondage." What helps you understand your feelings better so you don't blurt out damaging words? Before you forward that e-mail, or post that tart response on social media, are you willing to ask, "Does this give grace? Does it build up? Can I picture Jesus sending this?"

Thursday: John 18:10-11, 33-40

Pilate, a tough, cynical Roman politician, thought he knew how kings behaved. In his opinion, Jesus didn't act like a king. He was probably mocking the Jewish leaders more than honoring Jesus when he called him "the king of the Jews." What makes Jesus the kind of leader you want to follow? In what ways does his character shape the ways you choose which human leaders win your trust and allegiance?

Friday: Acts 17:22-28

Author Phillip Yancey said, "The issue is not whether I agree with someone but rather how I treat someone with whom I profoundly disagree. We Christians are called to use the 'weapons of grace,' which means treating even our opponents with love and respect." How can you share your faith with non-religious and nominally religious people without condemning them?

MOVING FORWARD

In the gospels, Jesus always did what is best for people. If we want to fix our polarized nation, Christians need to set the example. Instead of condemning people with our words, we should become students, not critics. Having a civil conversation and looking for common ground can go a long way to building bridges instead of tearing them down. Imagine what our world would look like if everyone loved like Jesus.

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) six. IIA) divided, B) social, C) Roman. IIIA) people, IIIB) behavior. C) critic.