



How aware is a fish of the water in which it swims? Not very. Similarly, we swim in cultural water everyday, often without realization or examination.

To complicate the matter, we live in a very polarizing time. American culture demands that we adhere to certain cultural dogmas, but it takes great thoughtfulness and courage to stop and consider whether or not these dogmas have Biblical basis or truth.

In this eight-week series, we will examine eight prevalent messages our culture preaches that, for better or worse, create the “water in which we swim” everyday. We will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each when considered in light of the gospel.

NOTE: There may be slight changes to what follows, primarily in the main passage(s) used. However, the ones shared below will be a great start and very applicable for the sermons.

The Politics Save Narrative

A Brief Explanation:



This narrative puts an inordinate amount of hope in politics. Unfortunately, such hope evaporates amidst partisanship and (un)civil discourse. Yet it's been said that politics is "a civilizing activity that serves to channel social conflicts in a reasonable way." If this is true, how can believers contribute to our political process with civility and reasonability? How can believers, of opposing political parties, avoid polarization and model discourse that honors their political opponent? How should churches speak to the issues of our day and impact our communities while still placing ultimate hope in God?

? What are your thoughts on this explanation? What would you add or change?

An Example from Culture

<http://graphics.wsj.com/blue-feed-red-feed/>

Blue Feed, Red Feed

See Liberal Facebook and Conservative Facebook, Side by Side

Facebook’s role in providing Americans with political news has never been stronger—or more controversial. Scholars worry that the social network can create “echo chambers,” where users see posts only from like-minded friends and media sources. Facebook encourages users to “keep an open mind” by seeking out posts that don’t appear in their feeds.

To demonstrate how reality may differ for different Facebook users, The Wall Street Journal created two feeds, one “blue” and the other “red.” If a source appears in the red feed, a majority of the articles shared from the source were classified as “very conservatively aligned” in a large 2015 Facebook study. For the blue feed, a majority of each source’s articles aligned “very liberal.” These aren’t intended to resemble actual individual news feeds. Instead, they are rare side-by-side looks at real conversations from different perspectives.

To begin, click on a topic. Be forewarned: These Facebook posts do not represent the reporting or opinion of The Wall Street Journal, and are not verified, edited or endorsed in any way. [Read our Methodology.](#)

To begin, click on a topic:

PRESIDENT TRUMP

HEALTH CARE

GUNS

ABORTION

ISIS

BUDGET



Discuss the image above.

? Where do you see the politics saves narrative play out in your life in the lives of those around you?

? What is your perception of the current political climate in the U.S.? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion? Why?

Bible



Psalm 146:1-10 (NIV)

- ¹ Praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD, my soul.
- ² I will praise the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
- ³ Do not put your trust in princes,
in human beings, who cannot save.
- ⁴ When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.
- ⁵ Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God.
- ⁶ He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.
- ⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free,
- ⁸ the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.
- ⁹ The LORD watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.
- ¹⁰ The LORD reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD.



Discuss the passage above.

? How does this passage relate to the politics saves narrative?



1 Samuel 8:1-22 (NIV)

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. ³ But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

⁴ So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

⁶ But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights.”

¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, “This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. ¹² Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶ Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. ²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

²¹ When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. ²² The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”

Then Samuel said to the Israelites, “Everyone go back to your own town.”



Discuss the passage above.



1 Peter 2:11-17 (NIV)

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as free

people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. ¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.



Matthew 22:15-22 (NIV)

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹ "Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

? How does our culture's politics saves narrative line up with teaching from God's Word? Where do they "agree"? Where do they "disagree"?

? Do you believe it's within the Christian's right to disengage from politics altogether? Why or why not?

? Do you have examples of Christians who are modeling civil discourse in a way that is worthy of imitation?

? In your opinion, should political beliefs be discussed from on stage on Sundays or in small group Bible study? What are the potential benefits or drawbacks from doing so?

? How are we to view this cultural narrative in light of gospel?

Application & Accountability

? What are one or two concrete ways you could model civil discourse with a person who is a political opponent (e.g. invite to coffee instead of rant on Facebook, ask questions rather than pass judgment, find common values rather than promote party agenda, pray together)?