

Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

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Congratulations, America!

As you read this we will be most likely in the midst of Election Day Tuesday, November 8, 2016. This means our Constitutional system of government is still intact. No person, or party, or military strongman has taken over the government to establish a dictatorship, a socialistic government, or a junta.

Regardless of how the election results turn out, America is the winner because our nation continues to move along following the political and philosophical dreams of our Founding Fathers. Now, don't misunderstand. Everything is not all lollypops and roses in our country. I have attempted to highlight many of the problems in the past several weeks. But America has not had to endure the endless cycle of government takeovers, or changes, with new or rewritten constitutions the way many countries have. Last I read, Italy has changed governments (not just leaders within their government, but restructure of how their country is run) 19 different times since the end of Mussolini and World War II. Here in America we have had one government for the past 240 years, with the Constitution being ratified by all 13 original states in 1790, our nation has moved along fairly well by staying within the Constitutional guidelines.

Since the end of World War II we have had 12 presidents. The 13th will either be Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. And in line of succession, our newest president will be the 45th president of the United States.

If you reflect on this achievement, it is quite spectacular that our nation has been able to stay focused on the importance of the rule of law as laid out in the Constitution. The office of the president is still bigger than any single person. Each elected candidate to this highest office of the land is awed and humbled by the role and responsibilities associated with the position. Some men have been crushed by the sheer weight of the job. Others have managed to keep their heads above water (barely, in some cases), and yet others seem to have been born to the job.

My pastor delivered a sermon this past Sunday, entitled, "Being a Christian in an Election Year." It was very well done. I am going to share the gist of it, hopefully doing it justice.

The basic premise of the message was this: During an election year, we tend to be, 1. Fearful, 2. Proudful, 3. Selfish, and 4. Divisive. These are not necessarily stand-alone characteristics. Instead, when you allow fear to enter into your thinking, the other three (pride, ego, and division) are nipping at your heels. I would share with you a passage written by the Apostle Paul in which he admonishes us to focus on the right things. Read this section carefully. Philippians 4:6-9: "*Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of*

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your life. Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.” [“The Message” Translation]

This is great encouragement because regardless of the election results, a lot of people are going to be unhappy. So then, based upon this Bible passage, if God is seated on his eternal throne, then all is well, and we need not fear anything. However, if God is not on his throne, then he does not exist and we should be full of fear because we are all in a world of hurt.

The naysayers from both political parties foresee the worst-case scenarios should their candidate lose. It's easy to get caught up in this fearmongering and forget that God is still very much involved in the affairs of the human race.

As for me, I choose to trust in God. He has blessed the United States of America, and I believe he still wants to, in spite of our wandering hearts as a nation.

So, that's why I say, Congratulations, America! Now watch and see what God has yet to accomplish. Be prepared to be amazed!

God bless America!