

FAITH & POLITICS

Sermon 4: “John Calvin, Presbyterians, and this Whole Thing About Politics”

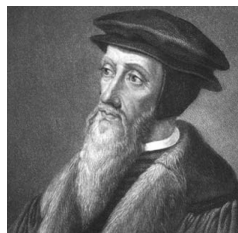
Recap:

- Politics is about governing our relationships with one another. From this perspective, Jesus—and the very gospel, itself—is political (not partisan).
- As Christian people, our allegiance is first to the kingdom of God.

The main question from last week: *Are we seeking God's truth or are we seeking to be right?*



Image: “The Best Supper” © Jan Richardson



John Calvin (July 10, 1509 – May 27, 1564)

Originally trained as a lawyer, Calvin was a French theologian, pastor, and reformer in Geneva during the Protestant Reformation. He is the author of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* and considered one of the principal figures in the development of Reformed Theology; the theological tradition of which the PC(USA) is a part of.

From Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*:

- Contrary to other reformers at the time, Calvin had a high view of government and found politics a useful means to restrain evil, promote the good, and defend the gospel.
- Calvin believed civil authorities to be ordained by God (Rom. 13) and that it is our Christian duty to submit to those authorities so long as they were held accountable to the will of God.
- Calvin did not advocate for Christian government or a theocracy. Rather, Calvin was concerned with how the individual Christian submits themselves to the will of God and seeks to be faithful.
- Calvin understood politics as a useful tool to accomplishing that end.

From the PC(USA) Book of Order:

- We are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. (F-3.0104)
- There are truths and forms with respect to which persons of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty of both private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other. (F-3.0105)

From Scripture:

- “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (Jn 13.34).
- Jesus prays for his disciples and those who would become his disciples, that they would be *one*. For in their unity, despite their diversity, the world would know that God loves them (Jn. 17.20-23).