

Good morning. I have to tell you up front that this might be a very short sermon. I think that it is appropriate, however, and important, for us to reflect a bit on our election, but, to be honest, I'm not really sure where to start.

This has been a hard week. It was hard, however, not because of the election itself, although I get it that the results were more troubling to some than to others. That's the way it always is, by the way. What made it hard, though, were the reactions. What was hard for me this week was having to so quickly relive, or in truth continue to live, the vicious campaign of the past six months when all I wanted was a break.

WE NEEDED A BREAK! We are worn down. We need a break from the name calling, and the dishonesty, and the political spin doctoring. We need a break from the power brokering, and the sound bites that told only a very small part of a truth, and the media choosing only the stories they wanted told, while ignoring other important information that an electorate would need in order to make an informed choice. And if you, right now, are nodding your heads thinking about how the OTHER party and candidate, which ever it was, was the great perpetrator of 2016, I suggest that you take a moment, maybe during our confession today, to reconsider that.

Our country is profoundly divided. But it is not just divided by some thin line. We are divided by a huge chasm of our own making. It is so far divided that all either side can see is the forest of the opposition instead of the beauty of the individual trees. It is no longer Aunt Sally over there, who used to push you on the tire swing or lovingly read you a story when mom and dad were given a rare date night out. Now she is part of those evil fascist conservatives or bleeding heart socialist liberals who needs to convert... or die. And the tremendously sad thing is that we are so far down that road that we are now birthing and raising a whole new generation who have known nothing different. And the thing is, it is self-inflicted. We are doing it to ourselves. But the truth is that there is no issue that we can't reasonably work out, if people would stop vilifying and start unifying.

This is not a football game or soccer game where we support the red team or the blue team because that is what our family has always done, or that is the part of the country we are from. This is not an every-four-year national championship game where the defeated fans storm the field and burn down the bleachers after a lost to avenge their bruised egos, or spike yard signs in celebration in their neighbor's front lawn to mark their triumph. This is way too important for such immaturities.

Like I said, it has been a hard week for me watching the news reports of the past few days.

But, thankfully, the election is over. The system was followed. The people of the 50 states and the District of Columbia had their say; just as it happened four years ago and eight years ago and back every four years to our country's founding.

This time Donald Trump was elected, and, although some voices would say different, it wasn't because we are country full of racists, misogynists, greedy capitalist, or redneck imbeciles. It was also not because President-elect Trump is some savant genius or a strategic military prodigy, which, by the way, can be said of every single President from the beginning.

This time Hilary Clinton was not elected and it wasn't because our country wants women back in the kitchen, and the bedroom, and the nursery, rocking our babies and serving their menfolk. And it was not because democrats are profoundly evil or inherently weak. Donald Trump was elected and Hilary Clinton was not because the majority of the states, and the electors that represent those people in those states, decided, in their sincere opinion, that a change in direction needed to be made and they chose the candidate that they felt was best able to implement that change that they wanted. That is, by the way, how our system works and always has.

So what now? What now for us as faithful followers of Christ? What now *from us* as Christ's church in the world? Well, as I considered those two questions and what God would want us to hear, three passages came to mind. I would like to share them with you.

The first passage comes from Matthew, Chapter 26. Jesus is on the Mount of Olives and they have come to arrest him. As they do so, Peter drew his sword and attacked. He swung his weapon and cut off the ear of one of the soldiers. As Jesus returned the ear to its rightful place, he turned to the people there, Peter especially, and told them that, if they decide to live by the sword, then they need to be prepared to die in the same way.

We have been forced into battle and division by our would-be leaders. We have been manipulated by others with personal agendas and axes to grind. And now, as a people and as a country, we need to heed Jesus' words. If we refuse to put down our swords, the swords we raise against our neighbors, our countrymen, we will surely find our demise at our own hands.

The second passage that came to mind was from the Gospel of John, chapter 14. In that passage we find the disciples concerned. They are preparing for the final journey to Jerusalem and the cross that waits for Jesus there. They are scared. They are scared that this is not going in the direction that *they* had decided that it should. And so Jesus comforts them. He says, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."

We are so used to believing solely in ourselves. In today's world, we are trained up from childhood to trust only in self. But God has something else in mind. God has something bigger

and better in mind. God has a higher governing structure to bring into place. In Genesis God sent Abram out and, as he did, he said to him, "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

We have been given the same promise, but note that God does not tell Abram to go and make a great nation. God told Abram that He, God, will make a great nation. God promises us only one thing in regards to our nation. God promises, only, that if we will trust him, *He* will make us a great nation. Or, we can choose to go it on our own and settle for what comes through our efforts.

The final passage comes from Acts, Chapter five. A trial is taking place. Peter, with some others, stand before the Temple Council who had charged them with teaching about Jesus. They were ready to take them out and execute them, when Gamaliel, the great teacher, stood up and told them that if this; this message that Peter and the others were proclaiming; is not of God, then God will end it just like he had done so many times before. If, however, this is of God, then nothing they can do will cause it to fail, and in the process, they might find themselves fighting against God, Himself.

Obviously, I am not equating our newly elected President to Jesus, or even to Peter. That would be silly. However, God just might be using this deficient man, just as we all are deficient, for a purpose, just like He did with King David. I know that He could.

I also know this. I know that as we pray for Donald over the next four years, we will be praying for God's will to be done, not ours. We will pray, we must pray, that God will take this faulty man, and all our leaders with their particular faults, and transform him, and them, into leaders that will take our country to where God would have it, to how God would have us.

My post-election message today is the same no matter who was elected:

Put down the sword! Put down the sword of violence; the sword of deceit; the sword of division; for, if we don't, we will surely die as a nation by it.

Pray! Pray for God's will to be done.

Believe and trust in God because our greatness can only come through Him.

And then let's all take a breath and give God a chance to lead both us and our leaders to the Godly and humble greatness that he promises for us so that we might then be God's blessing to all people. It is a lofty call. It is a critical mission. And it is one that we cannot accomplish on our own.

Amen