

I don't know, whether you are going to think, this was a good thing to do or not? I suppose it might depend, on whether you think praying for intervention in world affairs is appropriate? Or whether you vote left left, left, centre left, centre, right of centre, right or right right. But from Wednesday the 2nd of November, almost every day, I have prayed that the Republican Party in the US would lose the midterm elections.

I did this because I think a Republican party, allied to Donald Trump is bad, not only for America, but for the world in general. I think he is a man without any sort of moral compass or conscience, and I think he lies, simply lies, to further his own desire for power and control. And I think that the Republican Party has fallen under this promulgation of conspiracies and lies for the same reasons. Irrespective of the damage they do to democracy, both in the US and around the world. The damage they do to ethnic minorities, the poor, women, and the LGBT community. All they are interested in, is power and control.

I did it because I didn't want to imagine a world in which Donald Trump as President of the US, allowed a man like Vladimir Putin, no less morally bankrupt, conscionably seared, or a stranger to the truth; to do as he pleases.

So nearly every day I have prayed. **“Lord Jesus, please don't let the Republicans win.”**

I also realise that my prayer didn't accomplish all that I hoped it would. The Republicans got control of the House of Representatives, but the promised “red wave” didn't eventuate, and the Democrats control the Senate. And I'm not really claiming any kind of influence here. I don't think my single, solitary prayer, has made much of a difference, other than to me, but I prayed this prayer for the past two weeks, and it has felt good.

The world is still full of shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep, just as it was in Jeremiah's day. Our text focuses on the Shepherds of Israel, and the cumulative effect they have had on Israel's peace and prosperity. Last week we talked about the period in Israel's history just after exile into Babylon. Jeremiah writes and lives in the period immediately preceding, and then is carried into captivity, when the Israelites are deported. Everything that could have gone wrong did, and Jeremiah was there to see it and speak against it. And in our text this morning, we have his denunciation of Israel's Kings, Israel's Shepherds, for leading the people astray. For them being scattered all over the world and for Jerusalem being no more. It is a damning indictment, of abuse of power, service, and privilege.

But during the indicting, there is also a promise. God is a God who makes promises and keeps them, remember. A promise of a scattered people returned. A promise of evil Shepherds being dealt to, and new, good Shepherds being appointed. A promise like that last week; of prosperity over poverty, and fullness over being empty.

Israel's Shepherds were wicked and evil, they destroyed and scattered the sheep. God didn't like that.

God doesn't like it any better today. God's stand on injustice hasn't changed. God hasn't begun to turn a blind eye to the abuse of power, to lying and corruption, and war mongering and trading on people's insecurities and stupidity to get what you want. God hasn't changed God's mind on the oppression of women, ethnic peoples around the world, minorities of all kinds.

God didn't like it then. God doesn't like it now.

“Lord Jesus, please don’t let the Republicans win.”

Then at the very end of our reading for today, Jeremiah says, that God will raise up for David a righteous branch, and he shall reign as a King and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land ... he will be called “The Lord is our Righteousness.”

As Jesus comes to us on the last Sunday of the church year for 2022, he comes as Christ the King. He comes as he who dealt wisely, executed justice and was righteousness in the land when he was here on earth. And who, in his death and resurrection, called in to being the church to be and do the same.

As we face the end of this year before Christ the King, before the words of Jeremiah about abuse of power and position, about control and influence. As we hear that God has not changed God’s mind about these things. As we enter Advent 2023 ... please let us think about our own situations.

With what small or large amounts of power that we wield ... are we good Shepherds. In our homes and families. In our work places, communities, and groups. Here in church. With whatever power we hold over anyone else ... do we wield it wisely, justly, rightly.

Are we able to come before “The Lord who is our Righteousness” and pray ... Lord, help me ... I don’t want to be a bad Shepherd.

“Lord Jesus, please don’t let the Republicans win.”

Amen.