

February 25, 2018

Matthew 6:24
Mark 3:31-35

Background: 6 Pillars, today Loyalty

Today, not big fan of

- nationalism or national borders
- flag waving
- any strong signs of patriotism

My loyalty, allegiance is to God

Where does this come from?

Raised in a somewhat liberal household (father a Republican, mother a Democrat)

Product of 60's & 70's (remember Beatles first appearance on Ed Sullivan and moon landing)

Strongly influence by Vietnam Conflict

- made me a pacifist
- gave me a distrust of government

After college (1975) traveled Europe

Studied abroad from 1977-79 (met Barbara)

- anti-missile, peace movement strong in Europe
- shame, because of Vietnam and missiles

- everything better in Europe

Visit home

- Europe not better, different

This is where I began to understand a quote Jonathan Haidt shared in the video we showed last week. It is from the Zen master Seng-ts'an: "If you want the truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against. The struggle between for and against is the mind's worst disease."

Returned home in fall 1979

After seminary returned to Germany to marry, live, and work – from 1983-87

With incorporating language came incorporating history

Church's role in Germany in 1930's, 40's was horrendous

- flag waving
- state as head of the church
- vilifying of whole groups of people based on race, religion, mental and physical health

Being shown the bad, knowing how ashamed many Germans were of their history, encouraged me to look at my own country's history more honestly

Along the way, though, my most important discovery was how "American" I am; how much a product of the United States

- A fact I am proud of

But longer I live, more my faith grows, the less enamored I am of any country

My growing faith tells me we are all "children of God"; and, "all" for me includes all of creation, not just other human beings

All children of God are loved by God

What God loves, I am to love and serve

Such understanding has no room for human made borders,

no allegiance to nations – when those nations dishonor God and God's children

My loyalty is first and foremost to God, whom I find in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ

How I live, how I love the world God has entrusted me, us with determines how loyal I am.

This is not to say I am not loyal to my partner or my family

This is not to say I am disloyal to my country

But, when I see suffering, homelessness, hunger, my loyalty to God requires me to offer help, to relieve suffering, offer housing and food – whether U.S. citizen, immigrant, refugee, or illegal immigrant

This is how I make my decisions around issues of loyalty to tribe or nation

How do you make yours? Amen