



From the Desk of Pastor Meyer

I'm writing this the morning of "Snowmageddon 2025," while flakes and crystals fall outside my living room window. At the unofficial Mission Valley Weather Station, K-REV, we are reporting a "generous dusting," with winds piling up drifts to almost a tenth of an inch in some places. Traffic has slowed to a 45mph crawl instead of the usual 55+ as people navigate the dangerous "la Montaña rusa," the rollercoaster hill, in front of the parsonage. Following the sage advice of retired Harris County Judge Ed Emmett when Hurricane Ike came ashore in 2008, sane Mission Valleyites are "hunkered down," riding out the blizzard with mugs of hot cocoa, pots of chili, and curled up snug-as-a-bug-in-a-rug under piles of quilts and blankets. Like them, I am choosing to work from home today, not wanting to risk the dangerous commute.

I'm obviously being rather tongue-in-cheek in my description, but for many of us, it was a pretty but unusual sight to see as snowflakes drifted through the pre-dawn sky, coating parking lots, driveways and yards with a light layer of cottony, chilled precipitation. Others probably appreciate it less. Those who must be outside in the sub-freezing temperature and with wind chill in the mid-teens are quite miserable, I imagine. I am grateful for, yet also feel for, those who have to be outside, including ranchers, first responders, linemen, and others. As I fell asleep last night, I did so praying for all those people who have to be outside for the overall safety and welfare of others and their livelihood. I also prayed for those who have no home to call their own, who sleep in their cars and tents and alleyways, or whose homes are neither warm nor comfortable. It's humbling to be snug-as-a-bug-in-a-rug and remember those people, our neighbors, and pray they are safe in times like this, while also thanking God for the daily-bread blessings we often take for granted – warm, dry clothes, a hot meal, and a roof overhead.

Yesterday was also the inauguration of President Trump as our 47th president, just a handful of days after the death of President Carter. History shows Carter to have been a disaster of a president, but a magnificent humanitarian after leaving office. I remember when he lost in 1980 to Ronald Reagan, and then watching Reagan's inauguration on the capitol steps a few days before my 7th birthday. I didn't understand all the hullabaloo, then, about that incredible process that took place – what it meant for political parties, or candidates, or America or even the world. In the years since then, I watched other presidents being sworn into office, men from both parties, the political pendulum swinging back and forth in eight-year blocks, with a singular 4-year term of George H. W. Bush for contrast, from red to blue and back again, the nation led by donkeys and elephants. In all cases, the man solemnly swore to fulfill his office, "so help me God."

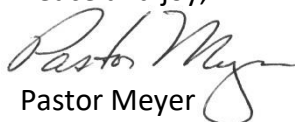
I cast no aspersions on the integrity of the man or the sincerity of that pledge. I might disagree with their ideas and ideals, but I want to believe that they intended the best for the country and our neighbors from coast to coast. They may have gone about it differently than me, and there were things they did that infuriated me as a citizen and as a pastor, both by Republicans and Democrats. There have been many things I criticized and there were things I praised. I wrote church newsletter articles, trying to give a Biblical worldview over and against what happened in Washington. For example, when people tried to say that Barak Obama's name was actually a hidden Hebrew curse, I wrote an article about the true meaning behind the Hebrew words supposedly hiding in his name. It was not well received. While some people (quite literally) referred to Donald Trump as "savior," I wrote about the danger of such idolatry.

One thing is a constant: regardless who resides at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue or who occupies the Naval Observatory, whether Congress leans left or right, whether the Supreme Court is liberal or conservative, God calls us to remember our elected officials and representatives in prayer. Whether we like or dislike them, whether we agree or disagree with their policies, politics or positions, we are called to pray for them as God's representatives. One of the clearest examples is in 1 Timothy 2:1-4: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way..."

You note, Paul says "pray for," not "about" them. Our prayers aren't to be a list of grievances about them, what they are doing wrong and telling God what He should do about it. Instead, pray for them, that God gives them wisdom and insight to govern wisely, that they remember the least and weakest (not just the rich and those they like), that they work for peace and charity and not seek war and bloodshed, that they are faithful to the Lord who placed them in the Office in the first place. It is also fair and right to pray for their repentance when they sin against God and neighbor (note – repentance, not because of your opinion but because of God's Law!). The list of things to pray for is almost endless – and not just for the elected official you like, but even for those you don't! Remember, Paul was writing during the time of Emperor Nero, whom history shows to be a wicked and evil man. If Paul's instructions didn't exclude Nero, we should not consider our resident Elephant or Donkey to be excluded.

As our calendars turn to February, Valentines Day is also drawing near. This "holiday of love" is marked with cards and candy, roses and jewelry. The date's namesake was a priest named Valentine. He dared to minister to both soldiers and prisoners who were declared to be outside the church's care. He was arrested and sentenced by both civil and religious courts. Tradition says he sent a note to the jailor's daughter, who was ill and whom he also ministered to, on the morning of his martyrdom signed, "Your Valentine." Thus, we mark Valentine's Day with heart-shaped cards and candy in token of our valentine, those whom we love. As we do so, remember the one who loves us greater than all, whose heart remained steadfast in His journey to the cross. There, He would demonstrate His love by dying, the innocent for the guilty; the sinless for the sinful. He surrendered His life for our death, and in His death, we are given life.

Peace and joy,


Pastor Meyer