

FOR YOUR CONTEMPLATION . . .

MUSICAL SOUNDS

(Alt. Title #1: God is the Master Chess Player)

I know what you are thinking . . . why in the world did you watch the "The Sound of Music" every night for 4 weeks? OK . . . now I really know what you're thinking: "How could we be wondering why you watched it 4 weeks in a row when you never even told us?" It was my last year of high school and I had just been hired to work at the local movie theater (singular) called Village Cinema in what turned out to be the easiest and most fun job of my entire life! I got to watch, er, I mean I *had* to watch every movie . . . to see if anyone was *smoking or sneaking in* through the back exit. The movies usually ran one week but "The Sound of Music" (my first working movie) was held over for 4 weeks. To pass the time on that one I actually started counting the words of the children to see who had the most. It turned out to be Liesl, but not really Liesl at all because Liesl turned out to be Agathe. I recently watched "The Von Trapp Family: A Life of Music" true movie from the book the oldest daughter wrote detailing what really happened during those years. She was never "16 going on 17" in love with the young man in the movie. A number of things in the original were changed, like their names and how many children there actually were. Maria did not become their governess but rather tutored one of the girls.

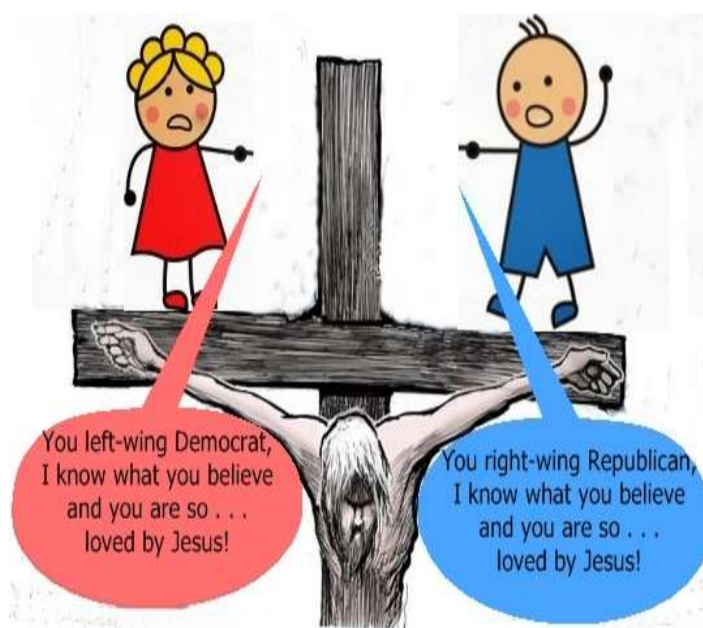
(Potentially *humorous digression* ((it is definitely a digression . . . the "potentially" part has to do with calling it humorous . . . and, yes, *this* is a definite digression from the first digression)) . . . I went on to get a 4 year Bachelor's degree and then a 3 year Master's degree. Then after all my years of study, booklearnin', and education, my first job out in the real world was . . . back at Village Cinema! I had returned to work there once again for a couple of months before I moved out to CA to be the full-time youth pastor of FBC Poway.)

The biggest difference in the newer version of The Sound of Music was how much the political climate and turmoil shaped what happened in their lives and the entire country. There was a new political government leader who many embraced because he was turning the economic tide in producing more jobs and a better economy. He was also protecting them by getting rid of the people who might harm them or lower the standards of the country. This was great news for many. It did not matter if anything unethical was happening because the end result of having a job, money, safety, and especially *being more prosperous*, was sufficient to justify any means to achieve these results. The friend of Agathe's who spoke out against the injustice, prejudice, and unethical practices of this new German government, was actually *gang murdered* because he dared to speak out against this new leadership. (For those who have ears to hear . . .)

**God has the ability to open our ears,
yet silence our fears.**

At times we are tempted to compromise because we rationalize that the end result is a far greater Godly good. I wanted to highlight or underline parts of that sentence for emphasis but it pretty much all ended up highlighted. So I will just retype and expand on it because I think it is so important. At times we are tempted to compromise (*our words or beliefs or actions*) because we rationalize (*think up any argument possible to justify our course of action because we desperately want our Godly outcome . . . even if we have to endorse a person or position that is not ethical or Godly*) that the end result (*no matter what means it takes to bring it about*) is a far greater Godly good (*because deep down we do not have the faith that God will come through so we have to help Him out with our human efforts*).

Do the ends justify the means? Is it OK to do something or support a philosophical or theological or political position that is unethical because we believe it will result in moving forward some idea or even Biblical position we hold dear? I think of Daniel and the 3 men of faith (you know who I mean, I can't remember how to spell their names) who would not compromise their faith, even to save their own lives, which would have seemed like the much greater good at that time if I was in their shoes . . . or sandals.



It has been heartbreaking for me to hear political leaders of our country *bully* other leaders or citizens or witnesses in an attempt to achieve a certain outcome. Once again, this is an example of using UNgodly means to achieve a desired end. Like in grade school, if anyone disagrees or states another opinion, that person is often called names or bullied. This is the exact opposite of what Jesus would do. We can't lie and bully people just to get our agenda through, even if the agenda is better! The ends do NOT justify the means. Let me rephrase that; using UNgodly means to attempt to achieve a Godly end is NOT the way of a Holy God.


Did you know *the Senate unanimously passed* a resolution (S.Res.607) 8/16/18 affirming that the media is NOT "the enemy of the people"? Using phrases like "*Fake news* media is the enemy of the people" attempts to divide and separate our great country. You can find *horrific examples* of historical leaders using the phrase "enemy of the people" to incite violence against anyone who dares to question their authority. But as Christians we should try to unite our country even when we have differing opinions.

So what can we do? Let me first ask you to fill in this blank: I am a citizen of _____. Did you think of the good old USA? (Apologies to those reading this in other countries. You can fill in the name of your country if you want to join in on the fun.) If you are a follower of Christ and member of the Kingdom of God then you are first and foremost a citizen of Heaven (Phil. 3:20). Remember that according to the written gospel accounts, Jesus did not spend any time trying to change the government or work through a governmental process to achieve change or better the Israeli national situation. He did not address the evil corrupt Roman government, so one thing we can do is stop being so politically obsessed! Are you as concerned about God's Kingdom coming as you are about American politics? Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:33 that we are to "seek first the Kingdom of God" and not put America first!

Another thing we can do is pray. The Bible urges us to pray for the president and all governmental leaders (I Timothy 2:1-2). I personally pray that our president would come to intimately know the author of *TRUTH* and the only *WAY* to *LIFE* eternal (John 4:16).

I Cor. 10:14 admonishes us to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. As a former youth pastor, I used that verse often to encourage teens about who they would date or marry. But it is not limited to that. We need to keep this in mind related to politics. I'm actually writing this 2 weeks *before* the Nov. election and unless I perfect my time machine, you will be reading this *after* the election. So I am not trying to tell

you who or what to vote for. I **am** telling us as followers of Christ, citizens of another Kingdom, that the most important thing is not how the elections turned out but rather how is "Thy Kingdom come" prioritized in your life? Since I am typing this before the Nov. election and nobody knows yet what the results will be (except the Russians, of course), I am going to make a prediction so we can see if I am a prophet or psychotic, er, I mean psychic. I predict that after the election . . . ***God will still be on the throne!*** And no matter what outcomes you may consider bad . . . God is the Master Chess Player!

Finally, I want to share my current paraphrase of Galatians 3:28: There is neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, Middle Easterner nor South American (or, to quote the president, those "from other parts farther south" . . . this must be a reference to those ***killer terrorist penguins*** . . . obviously part of ***Ice-is*** , black nor white (all are precious in His sight), but ALL are one in Christ Jesus.

Dear God, I confess it is so easy for me to get sucked into political debates. Please help me put my hope in King Jesus & not in politics, government, laws, officials, or America. Help me know what I can do & say to promote your Kingdom 1st above all else. Amen.

The Lord defends the rights of orphans and widows. He cares for foreigners and gives them food and clothing. And you should also care for them, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

Deut. 10:18-19 (CEV)