Dear Open Door Family,

Elections - not one of my favorite things. Do not misunderstand; I love our country and I am thankful for the opportunity and privilege of voting. I am thankful for the freedoms we have. Yet it would be easy to become fearful or depressed. One of the things that has challenged me often during elections is the reminder that I am supposed to put my HOPE in GOD - not politicians. These verses are an encouragement to do just that. Also, that TRUE peace is found ONLY in Jesus not in politics.

Psalm 42:5 *(HCS) Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God.*

John 14:27 *(HCS) Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful.*

With Christmas coming, this story and these words also challenged me after the elections yesterday: It was a nation seriously divided by war. The North fought against the South. Christians fought on both sides. How could God reign? How could God be in Control? The Civil War had started in 1861 and three months later Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's wife died after suffering severe burns when her clothing caught fire. Longfellow was seriously injured trying to put out the flames and save her life. The war waged on and in 1863 Longfellow received word that his son serving in the Union army had been severely wounded and crippled in battle. He struggled with deep depression as the Civil War continued. Then in 1864 as he continued in his depression God used tolling of the bells on Christmas morning to break through with Hope.

> I heard the bells on Christmas day Their old familiar carols play;
> In music sweet their tones repeat, "There's peace on earth, good will to men."
>
> I thought how, as the day had come, The belfries of all Christendom
> Had rolled along through unbroken song; Of peace on earth, good will to men.
>
> Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: **"GOD IS NOT DEAD, NOR DOES HE SLEEP,**
> **For Christ is HERE; His Spirit NEAR Brings peace on earth, good will to men."**
>
> When men repent and turn from sin, The Prince of Peace then enters in,
> And grace imparts within their hearts, His peace on earth, good will to men.
>
> O souls amid earth's busy strife, The Word of God is light and life;
> Oh, hear His voice, make Him your choice, Hail peace on earth, good will to men.
>
> Then happy, singing on your way, Your world will change from night to day;
> Your heart will feel the message real, Of peace on earth, good will to men.

PRAYER: Lord God, thank You that YOU are in Control, Thank You that You are GOOD and that I can trust You. Thank You that YOUR Word and Your Promises never change. Please Lord God, have mercy on our Nation - bring revival to me, to my family, to our church, and to our nation. Please use these times to remind us that YOU are the Sovereign Lord of ALL. Please help me to live out that Truth with Hope and Joy today and everyday.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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