

THE GRAPEVINE – Issue 43:21st Jan 2021

Dear Friends,

The contrast was there for all the world to see. Donald Trump with his supporters at his final rally, boarding Air Force One for the last time, took off to the sound of 'I Did it My Way', while Joe Biden went to St Matthew's Catholic Church in Washington to prepare himself before God for the task that lay ahead. And what a task it is. Probably one of the biggest of any American president in history.

Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. That is the first commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matt 22:37-40

Joe Biden quoted these verses in November as he wrote after winning the election: 'These abiding principles - loving God and loving others - are at the very foundation of my faith', he wrote. 'Throughout my career in public service, these values have kept me grounded in what matters most.Through the pain of losing my wife, my daughter, and my son, they have sustained me with eternal hope. My Faith has been a source of immeasurable solace in times of grief, and a daily inspiration to fight against the abuse of power in all forms.'

Biden went on to write: 'We all matter in the eyes of God, and it will take all of us to achieve the healing America so desperately needs. To follow God's greatest Commandment, and to love each other fully. Together we can win the battle of the soul of the nation....and do everything in our power to ensure that all God's children have the hope and future they so rightfully deserve.'

I was greatly moved by Biden's inauguration speech yesterday. It demonstrated his humility and commitment to serve his nation in these difficult days. However, I am was also aware that so many nations have been filled with great expectations at the start of the transition to new leadership, only to be disappointed and let down when their expectations have not been realised. This all reminds me that great leaders need good followers to succeed. Without them leaders can achieve very little. It takes the commitment of followers to make a nation and its leader great.

So as we pray for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris in the days that lie ahead we must also pray for reconciliation and unity for the people of America - that they might be good followers of that which is right and just, working for the common good of all God's children and his creation. We should pray that for all of us too.

I was so deeply moved and amazed by the 22 year old Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, who read her poem so beautifully after the president's inauguration. I finish with her final words: **"There is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."** Amen



May God's richest blessing be yours!

Samuel King