

Where is Your Citizenship?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 July 2016

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Philippians, the book of Philippians chapter 3, we'll be reading this chapter in its entirety! Philippians chapter 3 verse 1, finally my brothers rejoice in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again and it is a safeguard for you.

Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus and who put no confidence in the flesh, though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in regard to the law of Pharisee, as for zeal, persecuting the church, as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit, I now consider a loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss, compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ.

[1:33] The righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it, but one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

All of us who are mature should take such a view of things, and if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For as I have often told you before, and now say again, even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

[2:49] Their destiny is destruction. Their God is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies, so that they will be like his glorious body.

Citizenship in the United States is a very coveted thing today. You don't have to look around at the nations of the world for long to come to the conclusion that we have received many blessings from God just because of this one thing, that we are citizens of the United States.

Opportunities, privileges, freedoms that much of the world does not know. And most of us didn't do anything to become citizens other than being born in this country.

Clearly not our choice, but a kind providence of God upon us. Thirty-six years ago, my neighbor came all the way from Laos, right beside Vietnam, as a refugee.

And to become a U.S. citizen, he had to pass a test in English and in U.S. history and government. I wonder how many of you would pass that test if we had to take it.

[4:22] Well, that's what they have to do. And then he had to take an oath of allegiance to the United States and to uphold its Constitution. And he now shares in all the rights and freedoms and privileges of any of you native-born citizens of the United States.

Well, as precious as our citizenship is, there is a citizenship that puts it to shame. There is a citizenship that far outweighs all other citizenship, and that is citizenship in heaven.

It will take eternity to unpack the blessings of being a citizen of heaven. And that's the clear teaching of the Bible, that there are certain of the human race, that at the same time that they are citizens of their countries here below on earth, are also citizens of heaven.

And just that alone is quite remarkable. That the great king of heaven would receive any human citizens into his kingdom.

Because the whole human race had rebelled against him and against his laws. We didn't want him ruling over us. We didn't want him telling us what to do and when to do it and with whom and what not to do.

[5 : 49] And in our hatred, we murdered the king's son, the prince of life, the heir to the throne of heaven.

And we all pledged our allegiance in Adam to God's enemy, Satan. And we did his will rather than God's. And I say, does that not make it remarkable that any of us are citizens of heaven?

And yet, here in Philippians chapter 3 and verse 20, Paul can say about himself and about others, our citizenship is in heaven. Now, he was also a citizen of Rome and he mentioned that from time to time.

But this was the heartbeat of the apostle. This was what thrilled him to his bones. This is what kept him preaching the gospel of grace. That he was a citizen of heaven.

And think of it. Though part of the rebellious race, these people are citizens of heaven. That's their homeland. That's the place that they truly belong.

[6 : 55] And it's even more remarkable when we consider that Paul had formally slandered the king of heaven and had persecuted and killed his citizens. And yet, even this man, Paul, can write by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, our citizenship.

Yours and mine. I am a citizen of heaven, he can say. Well, now, these Philippians would understand what Paul was saying and teaching because Philippi enjoyed a unique status as being a colony of the city of Rome.

They were far from Rome. But they, as a city, were a colony of Rome where their emperor, their king, lived. And as such, all the rights and privileges of Rome were as much theirs down here in Philippi as if they lived within the city limits of Rome.

So everything that the citizens of Rome enjoyed, they enjoyed. The same rights and privileges. And so Paul is saying to these believers that we, though we live here on earth, we are citizens of heaven.

We are a colony of heaven. The place where our king reigns and where many of our fellow citizens now live as well.

[8 : 18] And where our inheritance is waiting for us. And where we will share in all the benefits of heaven's glory. So on this Independence Day weekend, I want to ask you, where is your citizenship?

Where do you belong? What is your homeland? What rights and privileges do you have? Are you a citizen of heaven? You see, no question could be more important to you than this because it has everything to do with where you will go when you die.

Will you go as a citizen to heaven? Or will you be excluded from citizenship in heaven because of your sin? And find that hell is your homeland forever and ever.

Well, you say, how would I know if I'm a citizen of heaven? And it is best to find out now while heaven is still receiving new citizens.

How would I know it? Well, the Bible gives a certain distinguishing marks by which these citizens of heaven are known. I wonder, do you know how to spot an American citizen abroad?

[9 : 33] You know how to spot them? We have friends from Europe and they know how to spot them. They've told me that we have certain marks that give away our citizenship in America.

Certain clothes that we wear. Certain language and volume and behavioristics, characteristics, mannerisms that enable them to spot an American a mile away, they say.

Well, I don't know. I suppose some of that may be true. But I know this is true, that we have, from the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul, ways to identify who the true citizens of heaven are.

They're given to us in Philippians chapter 3. He not only says our citizenship is in heaven, but he tells us how you and how I can know if we can say that for sure.

That if I died today, I know I am a citizen of heaven and I know I would go home there to be with my king forever. Well, early in chapter 3, Paul is warning the believers against the false teachers of the

Judaizers.

[10 : 48] These were the legalists. They taught that mere physical circumcision and obedience to the Jewish laws made you a citizen of heaven, made you right with God and enrolled your name there in heaven.

In fact, they had a tradition that said that Abraham stood by the gates to hell and he watched for any children of Abraham, circumcised men that would come there.

And he would not let them go into hell if they were circumcised in the flesh. It didn't matter how they lived, what they did with Jesus and his gospel. But if they had the mark of circumcision, they would not perish.

They belonged as citizens in heaven. Well, those were the kinds of men that were saying that circumcision is what gets you into heaven. Obeying the laws, the Judaistic laws of the Old Testament, that's what gets you into heaven.

And Paul now is warning the believers against them. They claim to be the true circumcision, the true people of God. Not the Christians, not the believers in Jesus.

[11 : 53] And Paul counters them in verses 2 and 3 of Philippians 3 saying, Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.

That's what he calls their circumcision because it's only outward. It was not of the heart. And he says those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we, we, not they, we who are the circumcision.

We are the true Jews. We are the true Israel, the true people of God. Regardless of our nationality, we are the ones who have been circumcised in heart.

Not some act upon our flesh, but the work of God upon our hearts. And then he gives us three marks of the true citizens of heaven. We, who worship by the Spirit of God.

We, who glory in Christ Jesus. And we, who make no confidence, put no confidence in the flesh. Now notice these marks of heaven citizens. As you're asking the question, am I a citizen of heaven?

[12 : 57] Here's three marks. First of all, they worship by the Spirit. Worship is the dead giveaway. It's the clear identifying mark of citizens of heaven.

And worship is something that we attribute ultimate worth to. It is the object of our worship. We say, that is the highest thing and person that I consider most worthy of my life, my all.

It's what we trust in. Who or what we hope in for help. It's what has our heart. What we love supremely. What we truly delight in. What we hold in awe and amazement and reverence.

That's what we worship. Worship. Now the sad reality is that we're all born into this world worshipping created things instead of the Creator who is blessed forever.

In fact, we worshiped anything but Christ. We worshiped ourselves. We worshiped things. We saw no beauty in Christ. We saw nothing in Him that we should desire Him.

[14 : 03] Nothing that we should say, I'm done with all my idols. I'm done with all these things I gave so much importance to and just neglected Him. And now He, He is the one I live for.

I trust in. I follow. I obey. I worship. I fear. I love. I adore. We had turned our back on Him and gone astray.

And we worshipped other things. You know that America, a Christian America is worshipping today, other gods. Let me tell you one of the most popular gods in Christian America.

It's a God who at death takes everyone to heaven. He just loves everybody. And regardless of what they've done with His Son and with the gospel and with His love, He just takes them all to heaven.

Isn't it wonderful that God loves us all so much? That's a God that is worshipped by many today.

And you know that's as much a false god as Moloch or Baal or Dagon, any of the other gods that the scriptures mention.

[15 : 13] And we were following gods of our own making, gods in our imagination. Oh, I think I'm okay. I go to church and I do this. And so we created this false god and maybe we tipped the hat to Him and worshipped Him.

But in reality, we were all worshipping ourselves. That's the record of scripture. That by nature, we loved ourselves more than God.

Well, something happened, didn't it? Because a mark of the heavenly citizens is that we worship by the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God came and changed our hearts, made us new creatures. Our warped worship was put right from the creature back to the Creator.

And the Spirit of God came in and said, let there be light. And suddenly, for the first time, we saw glory in Jesus Christ. We saw what worthless things we were living for. And we saw the one who deserves all of our praise, all of our adoration, the highest loyalty in life, all of our obedience, all of our trust and worship.

[16:24] It is God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And so, by the Spirit, we worship. You see? Left to ourselves, we would still be worshipping at the Shrine of Self or some other imaginary God.

But by the Spirit, we've been made new so that we can worship aright. Our eyes have been opened. We're born with our eyes. The devil has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, the image of God.

We couldn't see, but the Spirit came and gave light and shattered our darkness and enabled us to see. And now the one that we saw nothing in before, we see everything in.

And we don't want to have anything to do with other gods, with ourselves as God. But we worship Him by the Spirit. The Spirit is the divine matchmaker.

And He comes now and He reads with us the Holy Scriptures. And He shines His light on the Scriptures and He says, Behold Him. Look at Christ. Isn't He lovely? And He's shining His light upon Christ.

[17:34] He's glorifying Him so that we see His glories and we bow down and we worship. He's now the reason we live.

But it's only by the Spirit, you see. That's why Jesus told that religious Pharisee, Nicodemus, that He met with by night, Truly, truly, truly, I say to you that unless you are born again, you will not see or enter the kingdom of heaven.

You see, it takes nothing less than being born from above to enter the kingdom of heaven. The citizens of heaven are born of heaven.

Just as you became a citizen of the United States of America, most of you by being born of America. So you must be born of the Spirit. You must be born of heaven from above in order to be a citizen of heaven.

Well, my question is then, has the Spirit of God invaded your heart and turned your worship from the things of earth, from self, right upon God's Son?

[18:43] Are you worshipping Him? That's the first mark Paul gives us of those who are citizens of heaven. We worship by the Spirit of God. Secondly, they glory in Jesus Christ.

They glory. The word has a broad range of synonyms. We boast in Christ Jesus. We take pride in Christ Jesus.

We rejoice. We're glad in Christ Jesus. And so you can spot a citizen of heaven a mile away because he's all about Jesus. He's all about Jesus.

They make much of Him. They magnify and honor Him as the one worthy of all praise for their salvation. And no wonder.

He's the one who kept the law for His people. And He's the one who died for their sins. No wonder they're all about Jesus. No wonder they're glorying and boasting only in Him.

[19:39] They rejoice in Him. They can't get over the fact that He would love them and give Himself for them. And they boast in Him alone, as Paul can say.

God forbid that I should boast, that I should glory, except in the cross of Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world. What do they glory in? What do they rejoice in?

Christ Jesus. It's all Him, they say. And the next characteristic is really just the flip side of that coin. What's the next mark of heaven's citizens?

Well, they put no confidence in the flesh. Since they're glorying in Jesus and what He has done, they've got all their weight on Him.

That means there's no weight on themselves and what they have done. They put no confidence in the flesh. So when you ask one of these citizens of heaven, why should God make you a citizen of heaven?

[20:37] Why should He let you live with Him forever? They don't start listing all the good things they've done. Well, you know, I've done my best at keeping the Ten Commandments and been a good neighbor. I've been trying to keep the golden rule.

I've worked hard at my job, taking care of my family. And I've been regular at church and given tithes and reading my Bible and praying. They put no confidence in the flesh.

No, none. You see, that's not the language of Canaan. Of those citizens of heaven. They don't talk about what they have done. Not what my hands have done could save my guilty soul.

They love to sing that song. It's the dialect of heaven's citizens. They're quick to tell you, He saved me not because of righteous things that I had done, but because of His mercy.

An Amish bishop was told by a Christian man, You know that keeping these rules of the Amish church will not get you into heaven. To which he responded, Don't you think they'll help just a little?

[21:53] Just a little? Folks, that's not a problem with Amish. That's every man's problem. That's natural religion. That's all the religion of the world other than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus paid it all. Jesus must do it all. But every other religion leaves something for man, even if it's just a little, to make them right with God and to enroll their name in heaven as citizens of heaven.

No, no. Did you hear how the citizens of heaven speak? They put no confidence. Zilch. Zero. Zip. None. No confidence in the flesh.

All confidence on Christ. And that's why they glory in Jesus Christ. And that's what Paul goes on to say in the verses that follow. If anybody has reason to be confident in the flesh, he says, I'm more than anybody else.

I mean, I had the pedigree. I mean, I was a circumcised Jew from birth. And if ever there was one on the eighth day, and that marked me out as good for heaven in my own mind, I thought.

[23:04] And as for law keeping, I belong to the strictest sect of law keepers, the Pharisees. We not only kept the laws of God, we kept the hundreds of other laws that we added to make sure that we did keep the laws of God, though they actually would twist the laws of God in so doing.

And as for zeal in righteousness and zeal for Judaism, he says, I persecuted the church. I thought Jesus was a false messiah. And I had enough zeal for the true God, the living God, that I would actually kill Christians.

You see, I had all these things to boast in. And as for legalistic righteousness, well, I was faultless, outwardly impeccable. You couldn't put your finger and say, you know, he lives a profligate life.

No, he was moral and upstanding. He was a gentleman. And he once had confidence in these things, that they would get him into heaven at last.

But no more, you see. No more. Jesus Christ came into his life and forever changed his value system. So all these things that he used to take confidence in and glory in to get him into heaven at last, he now has counted as loss, as rubbish.

[24:14] They're actually on the negative side of the ledger because he was trusting in them.

They're not only worthless, they're negatives because it put his heart to lean on those things for heaven and not on Christ.

But now, he says, that's all changed. And now I see that Jesus Christ alone deserves my worship and my praise because he did it all. As someone said, the only thing I contributed to salvation was the sin that made it necessary.

Jesus saves. We sang it. Well, he now counts as everything, knowing Christ and being found in him, not having a righteousness of his own, which comes through keeping the law, but a righteousness that is from God.

It's a gift from God. And how do you receive it? Just by the empty hands of faith. You trust in Christ, in his perfect life, his atoning death, and his merit is put to your account in heaven.

It's from God, and it is by faith alone. And that's why he glories in Jesus and puts no confidence in the flesh.

[25:28] That's a clear mark of all citizens of heaven. Is it a mark of you and of your heart? Well, there's a fourth mark that Paul waits to the end of the chapter to bring up, and we'll wait to deal with it then as well.

So those are the marks of the citizens of heaven. Do they describe you? Well, they don't describe everyone. Not everyone is a citizen of heaven.

Some belong to the world, to this earth. Heaven's not their homeland. And so these marks of heaven's citizens do not describe them. Rather, there are other marks that describe them.

And Paul goes on to spell out some of the character marks of what I could call earthlings. Mere worldlings whose citizenship is in this world. They may be citizens of America, of Canada, of Brazil. They may be citizens of other nations. But it's all on earth, you see. They're earthlings. They do not have citizenship in heaven. And so Paul now turns to spelling out the character marks of some of these earthlings.

[26:36] He calls them enemies of the cross of Christ. You see that in verse 18? I've often told you before and now say again, even with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Now, there were probably these traveling missionaries and they had a message and they probably claimed to be friends of the cross and trusting in the cross and trusting in Jesus and, or else they wouldn't have even got a foot in the door of the church.

So they probably laid claim to Christ's cross, but their lives proved otherwise. Their lives denied the very purpose of the cross.

What was the purpose of the cross? It was to bring us to God, wasn't it? It was, it was to bring us to worship him. It was to save us from our sin. That's why his name is Jesus.

He will save his people from their sin. It's Jesus, the lamb of God who saves, takes away the sin of the world. He gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify a people who are his very own zealous of good deeds.

[27:43] That's the intention and design of the cross of Christ. He died to make us holy. He died to make us good. He died that we might go at last to heaven, saved by his precious blood.

But their lives do not show that the cross of Christ has set them free from sin. No, the cross of Christ has just become a license to sin.

Well, the blood of Jesus takes care of it all. I just first John one night it and it's done. Friends of the cross have this attitude of Christ.

If you would be my disciple, Jesus says, you need my attitude to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. And Jesus would rather die than sin.

He did die as the perfect substitute for his people. But the enemies of the cross, they don't deny self, they indulge self. And they use the cross as a license to go on sinning.

[28:50] So Paul gives us four descriptive marks of these enemies of the cross. Not all enemies of the cross have these, all of these marks. They all have the first mark. Their destiny, this is all in, in verse 19.

Their destiny is destruction. Their end is destruction, is what he's saying. Their citizenship is not in heaven. They don't belong there, whatever they claim.

Their true home is hell, where their lives prove that that is where they belong. That's their end.

Remember the Lord Jesus himself said there were two gates.

And those two gates opened up onto two ways. And those two ways led to two different destinies.

The wide gate is followed by a broad road.

And there's many on that road. And it leads where? To destruction. And that's exactly what Paul is saying. These people are on the broad road.

[29:57] There's plenty of room for all of their sin. And Jesus too. I've got Jesus and I've got my sin. I'm going down the broad road. So they think. They think they're going to make it to heaven.

But it's really leading to destruction. A destruction that is not annihilation. That is not extinction.

But a state of utter ruin. A state of being undone forever. They will wish for extinction but will not be able to die. It is called by Jesus everlasting punishment.

It is called by Paul everlasting destruction. A destruction that never ends. And I just remind you that Paul says this with tears in his eyes.

He's not a man gloating over people whose end is destruction. He's a man weeping. Even as Jesus wept over Jerusalem sinners who were stiff-necked and went on rejecting him.

[30:59] You know earthlings are so short-sighted. They're concerned about today. They live for immediate gratification. And it's into this pursuit of present self-indulgence that God intrudes with a searching question.

But what will you do in the end? But what will you do in the end? Okay? You're on this road. It's broad. It's fun. Your pleasures plenty of room for them.

But what will you do in the end? There is the nagging worm in the gourd. And that's why the end is not a favorite subject of earthlings.

They'd like to just change the subject. Conscience tells them they have nothing but doom awaiting them. No wonder they suppress the truth in their unrighteousness.

They push it down. They drown it out. It's not a pleasant thing to lay your head on your pillow at night and know that the end for me will be destruction. So I say we have a God now in America that you don't need to worry about that because everyone is a citizen of heaven.

[32:09] No, no. Paul says I say it even with tears their end is destruction. You see the only escape from this destruction is Jesus Christ the narrow gate.

You've got to come through Christ to get on the narrow road that leads to life. And that's why he says at the end of that sermon on the mount make sure you enter through the narrow gate. I am the way the truth and the life.

The only way to the Father is through me. But not for these they don't want Christ and so their end is destruction. Secondly their God is their stomach.

How do you tell an American who's abroad well there's certain behavior how do you tell an earthling who's not a citizen of heaven well it has to do with their appetites. It's a pretty clear statement isn't it?

Their God is their belly. God is their stomach. So rather than worshipping the true and living God they worship their stomach. Their physical appetites.

[33:11] Their physical desires. Romans 16 says such people are not serving our Lord Christ but their own appetites. You see the same kind of people that Paul's talking about here.

They may claim to be servants of Christ coming around to the churches. Paul has to warn against them because he says they're not serving our Lord Christ but they're serving their own appetites. So what does it mean then that their God is their stomach? Well it means they give God like status to their appetites for food and drink and sex and all other appetites of the body.

What are we to give to God? What do we give to the true and living God? We're to give our absolute allegiance, our loyalty, our trust, our obedience. We're to live for him. Well that is what they do to their appetites.

They make it ultimate. Their own desires become the things that must be served. Just as you would say, citizen of heaven, that Christ must be served. They would say, no, the thing that must really get satisfied is my desires.

[34:25] That's their supreme master. They've made their appetites their God. Whatever they desire is not to be denied, but indulged.

And so if appetite, if the appetite is there, to them it's to be fulfilled. If the desire is there, it must be satisfied, whatever it is, so they surrender themselves to gluttony, to drunkenness, to sexual immorality of all kinds.

That is making a God out of the stomach, out of the desires and appetites, rather than submitting our appetites to God and his law, and worshipping him with our bodies.

Isn't that what Paul tells us when the Corinthians would say to him, well, food for the stomach and the stomach for food. If the desire is there and the appetite's there, then satisfy it.

It was made for food and food for the stomach. And Paul says, no, you're missing something. If you're a citizen of heaven, God owns that body.

[35:29] the body is not to be made God. It's not supreme. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body.

And he plants the cross of Christ right there before the friends of the cross, saying, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God?

You're not your own. You were bought at a price. There's the cross. You were bought at a price.

Therefore, honor God in your body, which is his. All your appetites. Christ bought you.

Now honor him with all your appetites. Well, these make a God of their appetites. That's the mark of the mere earthling.

And then thirdly, their glory is in their shame. Their end is destruction, their God is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Notice how different the earthlings are from the citizens of heaven.

[36:31] What do the citizens of heaven glory in? Christ Jesus. What do these mere earthlings glory in? Their shame.

Isn't that something? They glory in their shame. Hmm. They boast about their freedom to do whatever they desire, fear, but those things are shameful.

So they end up glorying, proud about the things that ought to make them feel ashamed. But instead of blushing, they're bragging.

They do not even know how to blush, was the prophet's accusation. What's the boast of thousands of young people on university campuses after the weekend?

Is it not their sexual exploits? Is it not how much alcohol they consumed? They're boasting about their shame. So it's Monday, and it's my day off, and I take my car in to get some new tires, and I'm

sitting around in the waiting room, and I'm sitting beside a Notre Dame student and his mother, and he's bragging to her how we Germans out drank those Irish over the weekend.

[37:49] They glory in their shame. They boast about the very things that ought to make them blush. What's being celebrated in pride parades all across America and all across the world this summer?

It's what God calls an abomination, so don't be deceived. Such will not inherit the kingdom of God, nor will any sexually immoral.

Idolaters, adulterers, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, gossips, swindlers.

Such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God. You once were like that, but now you're citizens of heaven.

You worship not your appetites, but Jesus Christ, and that by the Spirit of God, working the miracle. When you were slaves of sin, he asked, what benefit did you reap at that time from the things that you're now ashamed of?

[38:55] Those things result in death, but now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life, for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Those things you are now ashamed of, citizens of heaven. Now you glory in Jesus Christ and the eternal life that has come through him.

Will these glory in their shame and then lastly, the summation of their life is that their mind is on earthly things. Does it not track that they who are earthlings have their mind set on earthly things?

This week I heard of an old man with a small fortune, and occasionally he would go to the bank and ask to see his four million dollars, thinking that the bank kept all his money there for him to see.

But the point was it was his treasure, and he wanted to see it. The mind naturally tends toward what we treasure, to what we worship, what is most important to us, and we set, we fix our minds on the things that are important to us, are they earthly things or are they heavenly things?

[40:09] Well, for the earthling, his mind is on earthly things. Follow a carrier pigeon and before long, in its flight, it will return home. Follow your thoughts and before long, they will lead to your home.

Is it heaven? Are you a citizen there? Or is it merely the things of earth? It shows your homeland.

Their thoughts are set on things below because that's where all their treasures are.

They're worldlings who love the world and the things that are in the world even though they are perishing, and that's why their mind is dominated by worldly things, so that they have, because they have no reward beyond this life.

Pilgrim's Progress has a beautiful section where Christiana, that's Christian's wife who comes along the journey after he dies and goes to heaven.

Christiana and her children are making their way now to heaven, and they come to Interpreter's house, and she and her children are in a room, and there was a man raking up dirt and trash with a muckrake.

[41:21] He had no time for anything else. And there was an angel over him offering him an everlasting crown for his muckrake, but he could not see it. And the only way he could look was downward, and he kept exceedingly busy, raking among the muck.

The trash on the floor. Christiana says, I think I see the meaning of this. Is he not a man of this world who has no time for eternal things? Interpreter, you are right, and his muckrake shows his carnal mind.

He's bent on gathering as much trash of the world as possible before he dies. He has no time to think of eternal things. To many, heaven is but a fable, and the material things of this perishing world are the only substantial things.

And as you see, he can look no way but downward, and this reveals the power of earthly things to so capture men's mind as to close their hearts to the love of God and the realities of the world to come.

For the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. The earthling is a muckraker and his mind is set on earthly things.

[42:48] He doesn't look up because those things are fairy tale things. Those things aren't real. This is real. That's all he can see. Remember as a boy someone told me whenever I'm walking somewhere to always have my head down on the sidewalk because I might find some money.

And you know I have found some pennies and nickels and quarters. I even found a dollar bill one day. But I found far more riches looking upward. Eternal riches.

A savior. Forgiveness of sins. Adoption. justification. Holiness. To be made like him. I have received eternal wealth.

By looking upwards. We're all born muckrakers. Every one of us. Took a new birth by the spirit to make us worshipers.

That look up and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Now notice the strong contrast then that is drawn. Having said that their minds are on earthly things.

[43:55] There's the description of the earthling. Their end is destruction. God is their stomach. Their glory is in their shame and their mind is on earthly things. And now comes the contrast.

But our citizenship is in heaven. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a savior from there.

The Lord Jesus Christ. So the mind instinctively returns to the homeland. The earthling's mind goes no further than the earth.

That's all the reward they have is in this life. That's where their citizenship is. But the heavenly citizens you can tell them because they're always looking up.

Somebody said that's how you can tell farmers visiting New York City. They got sunburn on their Adam's apple. Because they're always looking up at these skyscrapers. They're just wowed by them.

[44:54] Well there's a mark similar to that that marks the citizens of heaven. They're always looking up. They've got this forward upward look about them. It's almost as if they're expecting someone to come through the split skies and to come down out of the heavens.

And indeed they are. They're looking for the Savior. They're eagerly waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come from there. Their hearts are in heaven. Their king is in heaven. Their eternal inheritance is in heaven.

And it's there. Their reward is with them. And it's reserved for them. And so their eyes are upward. He's coming again. That's the last.

That's the fourth mark then of the citizens of heaven. You see it. They eagerly wait for a Savior from there. And that's why their mind is set on things above.

Not on mere earthly things. Their best things are yet to come. So dear believers, the focal point of what we're looking for, notice, is not just heaven, but someone from heaven.

[46:01] even the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. We're waiting for him who wore the crown of thorns and took the nails and the wrath of God for us.

And we're going to see him face to face. And we're going to bow and worship him with perfect worship. We're going to live with him forever.

We're going to live in the new heavens and the new earth that he will bring in, where everything will be perfected. He's risen and he's coming again, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to all those who are waiting for him, longing for him.

And when he comes, he's going to bring final salvation. You know, as he's mentioned in his saviorhood, they're looking for a savior from there. He is a savior and he has accomplished at the cross the great victory.

But you know, there's still things for him to finish. We heard it this morning in our worship that he saves the world from sin. There's still the curse of sin left in this world.

[47:08] He's coming to cleanse it completely. And when he comes, he will transform our lowly bodies that they might become like his glorious body.

That's part of this great salvation that he's bringing. Yes, we've been made right with God, as justified and right with God as we will ever be. But we are not yet as holy as we will ever be.

And when he comes, we see him as he is. We will be made like him. That's the great hope. And he who has that hope purifies himself.

Somebody says, how can this be? How can these lowly bodies be made like his glorious body when some of them have been eaten by wild animals? Some of them have gone to the bottom of the ocean and disintegrated.

A lot of them have been eaten by worms. How can these bodies of believers, of citizens of heaven, be transformed like his glorious body? Well, he says, by the same power that enables him to bring all things into subjection to him.

[48:14] It's who he is. He's the Lord. The Lord, Jesus Christ, whose kingdom is over all. And so he has the power not only to transform our bodies, but to transform the whole universe so that you'll not find one square inch where there is anything but purity and righteousness, nothing of sin, nothing of the curse.

And if he can do that, well, then it's nothing for him to change our bodies into the likeness of Christ's glorified body. So where is your citizenship? Is it in heaven or is it merely on earth?

Because if our citizenship is in heaven, that fact is to drastically affect our lives. The way we live now is to keep us looking upward and forward.

Not looking back. Remember, Paul says, I'm looking forward. I'm straining for that for which Christ laid hold of me. He laid hold of me to perfect me. I'm looking for that day. I haven't got there yet, but one day I will.

So I'm looking forward. I'm looking upward. If you're a citizen of heaven, you keep that forward upward look. You're waiting for Jesus, the lover of your soul.

[49:28] And so you live here as pilgrims and strangers. You don't settle in here as if it were your home. No, you confess, not only with your lips, but with your life.

I'm just passing through. This world is not my home. I'm a pilgrim here. My homeland is with Christ in heaven.

Does your life say that? Do your neighbors watching you and people closest to you who know you? Can they say, you know, his life only makes sense if he's a citizen of another place because he's not living for this place.

Oh, yes, he's a citizen of the United States. Yes, he has many privileges and enjoys them. But there is a part of this man, this woman, indeed is the greater part of her that does not find her home here. She's living for heaven. That's the only thing that makes sense of her life. And so citizens of heaven, live as pilgrims and strangers here who are on your way home.

[50:29] And he who has this hope purifies himself even as he is pure. So then, dear friends, since you are looking for forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him.

Our citizenship is in heaven. And so as we see our own country sliding into destruction, another step this week, another step next year, and we begin to see the erosion of the value of our citizenship here.

May it just make us treasure all the more this isn't our home. Our citizenship is in heaven where we expect a savior. Let's put our confidence in him and glory in him together.

We can do that by our closing hymn number 15, in your grace hymns, in Christ alone, not the works that I have done, but in Christ alone, his death, his life, do I find myself a citizen of heaven.

It took the blood of Christ, it took the new birth of the spirit to make us citizens of heaven. Number 15, let's stand as we sing together. Let's pray.

[51:50] Our Father, we pause on this Independence Day weekend to give you thanks for our country and all the privileges and freedoms that we have received by being one of its citizens.

It is your providence that has placed us here and we would sin against you did we not glorify and give you thanks for these many mercies.

It was here in this land that we heard the gospel when many other lands do not have it. And we thank you that we not only receive the outward word but you sent the gospel along with it you sent the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to this Savior.

For many of us we now have eyes to see the worth of the Lord Jesus and we worship him. We want to worship him more. We look forward to the day he'll come and we'll worship with unsinning heart. We do marvel that we who are rebels are now citizens of heaven. no ISIS fighter fights against America the way that we fought against you and yet you have extended mercy and grace to us in Jesus Christ.

[53:10] Now make us to live as citizens of heaven looking for our Savior that day when he will come and we will fall at his feet and we will give him the praise.

we thank you that it is true. Bring others this day to trust in the Savior and be enrolled as citizens there. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.