**Our Citizenship is in Heaven**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Philippians 3:16-21**

**Wednesday Evening**

**March 23, 2022**

**Philippians 3:16-21**

16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

**16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.**

**Philippians 2:5-7**

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Saints, Christian maturity involves acting on the guidance that we have already received. The believers were in different stages, but everyone needed to obey the truth they had learned already.

**2 Corinthians 13:11**

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you”

As they pressed on toward the goal, they should not use their lack of complete knowledge as an excuse for taking lightly what they knew or for getting sidetracked. They should continue to learn and grow, while at the same time governing their lives by the light they had already received.

**17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.**

Saints, Paul used these two key words for discipleship: pattern and example. Paul challenged the Philippians to pursue Christlikeness by following Paul’s own example and the examples of others whose lives were based on his (those “mature”).

**1 Corinthians 11:1-3**

1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. 3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Saints, this was not egotism on Paul’s part, for Paul always focused on Jesus Christ and urged the believers to also follow the example of others who followed Christ. They should not follow false teachers or the enemies of the cross.

Instead, as Paul focused his life on being like Christ, so should they. The Gospels may not yet have been in circulation, so Paul could not tell them to read the Bible to see what Christ was like.

Saints, therefore, he urged them to imitate him as a practical guide for conduct. That Paul could tell people to follow his example is a testimony to his character. Can you do the same? What kind of follower would a new Christian become if he or she imitated you?

**18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:**

Saints, the reason for Paul’s admonition to follow his example was to turn the believers away from following the bad examples of the false teachers, the Judaizers, and any others who claimed to be believers but refused to live up to Christ’s model of servanthood and self-sacrifice.

**2 Corinthians 11:12-15**

12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. 13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Saints, these people focused on their own attainments, thus making them enemies of the cross of Christ. Paul had warned the Philippians about false teachings, and he continued to do so with tears.

**19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.**

Saints, the undisputed author of this letter is the apostle Paul, missionary to the Gentiles, imprisoned in Rome for preaching the gospel. Paul had founded the church in Philippi, so the recipients of the letter were his dear friends and children in the faith.

Saints, Paul wrote this letter from Rome. He had arrived there through a series of unusual circumstances. He had been arrested in Jerusalem by the Romans for seemingly inciting a riot. As a prisoner being unjustly tried, Paul used the opportunity to get to Rome by appealing his case to Caesar.

Paul had wanted to preach the gospel in Rome, and he eventually got there—in chains, through shipwreck, and after many trials

In Rome, Paul was under house arrest. This meant that he could receive visitors and write and receive letters. Paul had to finance his imprisonment.

Acts 28:30 states that Paul had to pay for his own rented apartment in Rome; plus he had to pay for the guards as required by Rome.

**Acts 28:30-31**

30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

Saints, although Paul’s normal policy was not to accept support from the churches so that he could not be accused of having a “profit motive,” he did accept a gift from the Philippians for his support in prison (see 4:10-18).

**Philippians 4:16-20**

16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**20 For** **our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**

Saints, While the false teachers had their minds on earthly matters, believers ought to be yearning for their home.

**Mark 13:24-27**

24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in heaven will be shaken. 26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Paul’s speaking of being citizens of heaven struck a chord with the Philippians. Philippi was a Roman colony; those who lived in Philippi had their citizenship in far-off Rome, although most of the Philippians had never been there.

Roman citizenship was highly prized during Paul’s time. The Christians in Philippi, as proud as they had been of their Roman citizenship, should have valued even more highly their citizenship in heaven where the Lord Jesus Christ lives.

Saints, the believers should have thought of themselves as “resident aliens” living temporarily in a foreign country with their home elsewhere. One day they would experience all the special privileges of their heavenly citizenship because Christ would return as their Savior.

Believers are expecting the Savior to return from heaven to earth at his second coming. While on earth, believers were citizens of their country (the Philippians were citizens of Rome itself and thus under Caesar’s rule), yet absolute loyalty was to the one and only true Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who rules in heaven, where all believers hold their ultimate citizenship.

**21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**

Saints, When Christ returns, he will conquer everything, everywhere. There will be no more sin, no more evil rulers, no more persecution of believers. Christ will be King of kings and Lord of lords, ruler over all;

**Revelation 19:11-16**

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

**Revelation 21:22-27**

22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

**Psalm 8:6**

“You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands”

**1 Corinthians 15:24-28**

24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

**Hebrews 2:8-9**

8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Saints, with that same power, he will transform all believers’ weak mortal bodies into glorious bodies like Christ’s resurrected body. Our identities will not change, but our bodies will be like Jesus’ glorified body. This won’t be an external resemblance, but we will share his nature and life.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**