

Our True Citizenship

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Text: *Philippians 3:17-21*

Introduction

A survey was taken to find out which country is the most patriotic country? Guess what? America rank No. 1. The survey showed that more Americans said they were proud of their homeland than any other country's citizens.

Most Americans are patriotic. Many have died and are willing to die for this country. Patriotism is a devotion, love and loyalty to one's country. Patriotism is natural and normal. To love one's country is reasonable and commendable.

Many of us were born and raised in the Philippines. I, with my brothers and sister, came over to the US on May 1988. I was 29 years old and was still single. After five years I became a naturalized citizen to which I have no regrets. I took the Oath of Allegiance.

Oath of Allegiance

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.

What a solemn oath! When I took that oath I was basically saying that I believe in the United States of America and it is my duty to love it; to support its constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies; to work diligently; to be a law-abiding citizen; and not to ask what this country can do for me but what I can do for this country. This should be true for all American citizens whether native or naturalized citizen. May we continue to be the most patriotic country in the whole world.

But this morning, my primary topic is not earthly patriotism and earthly citizenship but heavenly patriotism and heavenly citizenship.

I – Our Conversation

Philippians 3:20 For our **conversation** is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

The word “conversation” here does not mean our talk or verbal communication with one another. Actually it is never used in this sense in the Bible.

There are two ways the word “conversation” is used in the Bible and they are closely related.

1. Manner of life

Conduct, behavior, lifestyle, way of life, manner of life,

Philippians 1:27 Only let your **conversation** be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

2. Citizenship

Philippians 3:20a For our **conversation** is in heaven;...

The word “conversation” here means citizenship.

Politeuma – Greek word which means citizenship or state, civic, civil

There are two kinds of people in this world. You are either a citizen of this world or a citizen of Heaven. If you are a true child of God and have been born again by the grace of God, your true and ultimate citizenship is in Heaven. Your true and ultimate homeland is in Heaven. You belong to Heaven. You don't belong to this world.

Do not forget that you are right now, real citizens of an eternal Kingdom, a Kingdom which shall never pass away. While living on this earth, we are already at this present moment, citizens of Heaven.

Christians are in this world but not of this world. “Our citizenship is in heaven,” he was not speaking about a future promise, but a present reality!

The fact is that every true Christian's citizenship is in Heaven.

Hebrews 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

We look for a continuing city. We look for an eternal city.

*This world is not my home I'm just a passing through
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore! .*

II – Our Privileges

What does it mean that our citizenship is in heaven?

A citizen is a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protection of that country. Citizens adopt the culture and practices of the nation or kingdom to which they belong.

As citizens of Heaven, pilgrims, strangers, and foreigners in this world, we have the great privilege of being an ambassador for Christ, We are right now the sons of God; God is our Father, Christ is our Savior, the saints are our companions, angels are our servants, and the Scripture is our Constitution, and our roadmap through life!

III – Our Responsibilities

"With great privilege comes great responsibility." From those to whom much has been given, much is expected. All this privilege we enjoy and have always enjoyed is grace, pure and simple. We didn't "earn" it. It's not entitlement but it's grace. It's a gift.

We are privileged, and the duty of privilege is absolute gratitude and integrity.

Citizens have a function. We have a job to do. Citizens have a responsibility.

1. Behave like a citizen of Heaven

Since we are citizens of Heaven we must behave like one. We must live, act and behave like foreigners on earth.

Let our lives be conformed to the glory of our citizenship. In heaven they are holy, they are obedient, they are active, they are full of love, they worship God, and they rejoice in God, they are fixed in God and the things of God.

Don't fix your heart loving the things of this world

[Philippians 3:19 Whose end \(destiny\) is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.\)](#)

Don't be like the people of the world who mind earthly things. They think only about this life here on earth. Their minds are set on worldly things.

[1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17: And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.](#)

The people of this world live for this world. They live for the world's treasure, the world's pleasure, the world's honor, the world's power and the world's wisdom. The person living for this world is one whose heart is fixed in loving attachment to the things of this world. But you are not of this world.

[2 Peter 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,](#)

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people we should be? We should live holy and godly lives.

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Let your life or conduct be free from covetousness. Do not let love of money and things dominate your life. Instead of being covetous be content. Contentment comes when we realize that Christ will never leave us nor forsake us.

Abstain from worldly lust

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as **strangers** and **pilgrims**, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12: Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Peter calls his readers "strangers and pilgrims." The word here rendered "strangers" means foreigners. We are foreigners in a strange land. We are travelers and visitors, who stay for a time in a foreign country, not permanently settling in it. On earth we are strangers and pilgrims, for our true citizenship is in Heaven.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;**

As strangers and pilgrims we should remember our homeland, and not follow the practices of the strange land in which we sojourn. Abstain from the the lusts of the flesh; all those desires which issue out of our corrupt nature ([Galatians 5:16-21](#)). Separate from it, and not conform to it; abstain from all appearance of evil, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.

12: Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Walk piously among unbelievers so that they may cease to slander Christians, and may themselves be converted to Christ.

2. Be a loyal citizen of Heaven

Since your true citizenship is in Heaven pledge your allegiance to Christ and His kingdom.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Christian Flag (Christ and His Kingdom)

I pledge allegiance to the Christian Flag and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty to all who believe.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Bible (Constitution)

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word, I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path and will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Lamb

I pledge allegiance to the Lamb with all my strength, with all I am. I will seek to honor His commands I pledge allegiance to the Lamb.

By all means, let us be patriotic. Let us love our country. Let us have loyalty. **But let us not forget that true patriotism** is Christians loving their true homeland which is Heaven, and their King and Ruler Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for our soldiers preserving and protecting our freedom. They have a great love and devotion for this country. But may our love and devotion to Christ and His kingdom **be not less than** our beloved soldiers' love and devotion for this country.

May we have true devotion to God and His kingdom and make it known! Let people know who side you are on!

I heard a story that took place during the civil war when **General Sherman** and his army were invading and destroying the South. He was riding on his horse when an old weak lady walked up to him with a broomstick and she started beating on him. It didn't really hurt him, she was very old and not very strong and after awhile he said, "Mam you're not hurting me and you're not going to change anything that we are going to do, coming out here with your broomstick." The old lady said, "*I know that but I want everybody to know whose side I'm on!*"

IV – Our Motivation

Why are we to live like foreigners on earth? Why is it important to remember that our citizenship is in Heaven?

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

There is a great reason why we should live like aliens and foreigners here, because Jesus Christ is coming again and He is coming soon!

Do not lay up your treasure here, for it may at any time vanish, at any time disappear, for Christ may at any moment come.

2 Peter 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Today He may appear, while here we stand; just when we think that he will not come, the thief shall break open the house. We ought, therefore, to be always watching.

Remembering Christ is coming again will help us to behave differently from the citizens and children of this world, not to hold on to the things of this world and persevere, for to be different from this world will entail temptation, trials and persecution.

Philippians 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

IV - Conclusion

1. To the believers

1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so **be ye holy in all manner of conversation**; 16: Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17: And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: **Set your affection on things above**, not on things on the earth.

May God help us to **be more heavenly minded**. You heard the statement *“So and so is so heavenly minded he is no earthly good.”* I have never met such a person in my life. We have people who are so earthly minded that they are no heavenly good. We have churches full of people who so earthly minded that little heavenly good are being done.

No one can be too heavenly minded, because if it's true heavenly mindedness, there will be an increasing devotion to Christ, that there will be intensified care to obey Christ and that will make us careful to obey Christ in every detail of life here on earth. We will do more good on earth in direct proportion to our heavenly mindedness.

Whose side are you on? Does everybody know whose side you're on? Does even anybody know whose side you're on? Where is your allegiance? Christ or Satan? **If Christ is God serve Him. If Satan is God then serve him.** You cannot serve both. You have to choose. Don't claim to love Christ when you are at the same time fascinated with this world!

Matthew 6:24 **No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**

Many have tried but every one of them failed. Let everybody know whose side you're on.

2. To the unbelievers

Are you a citizen of Heaven or a citizen of this world?

Nobody is born a citizen of Heaven

We are all born a citizen of this world. We are all by nature worldly. We mind earthly things. Our treasure is on this earth. To become a citizen of Heaven you must be born again. I know the born again has a bad connotation to many people. But “born again” is a precious truth. It is a Bible truth. What does it mean to be born again? It simply means **God has done a supernatural gracious work in your heart and soul that you have repented and believed the Gospel.**

How do you know you have repented?

You have taken the problem of sin seriously. You are grieved that you have offended a holy God. You are grieved that you have broken His holy law. You are so grieved that you are willing to

turn from your sins. You acknowledge that if God judges you by His holy law it is just or right for God to punish you in Hell.

How do you know you have believed?

You have taken God's remedy to the problem of sin seriously. You are no longer trusting in your goodness, your good works, and your own righteousness. Now you are completely relying and trusting on the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross and nothing else.

Have you been born again?

[John 3:3](#) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

[John 3:5](#) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

In order to see and to enter the kingdom of God, you must be born again. You must become a citizen of Heaven. In heaven there are **no tourists, no illegal aliens or immigrants, no TNT, no temporary visa**. Those who will be allowed are only true citizens of Heaven. Are you? If your answer is no, my question to you is, do you want to be? Then come to the One who alone can make you a new person, who can deliver you from your sins. Come to Christ and embrace Him as your Saviour. Amen!