

## Our Heavenly Citizenship

Philippians 3:20-4:1

03/25/07

### Intro

Generally speaking, when a person is a citizen of a certain place they will have certain characteristics because they live in that place. Things from the type of food you like to eat to the language you speak. I met a man the other day I could tell immediately that he was from West Africa.

Paul in this passage tells us that our citizenship is in heaven, and in light of that gives us the perspective in how we ought to live our lives. Perspective is very important. I remember how quickly my perspective changed once while on the Max Train.

### **Illus – Jacob on the Max Train**

The fact that we are citizens of heaven should penetrate every part of who we are. It is important for us to live with the understanding that our home is in heaven with Jesus.

**These truths give us perspective on how we should live in this world.**

### **I. Live As Citizens of Heaven**

- It's important first to look at how we become citizens of heaven.

#### A. Transferred from one kingdom to another

- This happens as we place our faith in Jesus Christ.

**Colossians 1:13-14, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His**

**beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”**

**Illus – I have never emigrated to another country, but I hear that the process is rather difficult. With the Lord it is very simple. No long paper work, no fee to pay, Jesus already paid it all.**

### **Illus – Difficulty in bringing over African pastors.**

- The gospel message is simple, yet it huge implications! Confess, believe, receive.
- I don't have to strive to make myself a better so that God will let me in His kingdom. It is by faith.
- It is interesting to note that the same way we became a citizen, is the same way we live as a citizen of heaven, *by faith!*

### **Colossians 2:6, “Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,”**

- God is so gracious to make me a citizen of heaven! Surely none of us can say that we deserve to be a part of that kingdom.
- Our identity is now found not in this world, but in heaven.

#### B. Our identity is in heaven

- We are not *of* this world

**Ephesians 2:6, “and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”**

**Illus – I’ve got my passport and it identifies me as a citizen of the United States of America, that is a great blessing. Here is my license; it would identify me as an Oregon Citizen, another great blessing. But ultimately, where is my home?**

**App – Our identity is not found in this world, but it is who we are IN Christ.**

- Like Abraham we are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God:

**Hebrews 11:9-10, “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”**

- Abraham wasn’t trying to build His own kingdom. Notice that he dwelt in a tent.
- Dwelling in tents isn’t the most pleasant way to live on earth, but when we understand that it is just temporary, our attitude will change.

**App – It is so easy to get caught up in the abundance of things, it is good to have the Lord set our perspective for us.**

**Illus – We don’t have a dual citizenship. We are ambassadors of heaven.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”**

- Our allegiance is not merely to an earthly king, but first and foremost to Our Heavenly King.

*Transition: And since we don’t know when He will call us to our heavenly home...*

## **II. Be Ready For Heaven**

### **A. Jesus is Coming Back**

- Did you know that Jesus is coming back again? Does that excite you? Are you ready?

**Acts 1:10-11, “And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.’”**

- “We eagerly wait” not that we are just sitting around, but this should produce in us a fervency in serving the Lord.

**Hebrews 10:24-25, “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”**

- Paul was anticipating the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus, an attitude of readiness.
- Not only is He coming back but He is preparing a place for us in heaven:

**John 14:1-2, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”**

*Transition: When He comes back He is going to do a marvelous work in us.*

A. He will transform us into His image

- Paul is referring to the resurrection of the dead here. This is expounded on in another passage:

**Turn to 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-44, 49, 51-58**

- It will be a body fit for eternity (v. 42)
- It will be a physical body, we won't just be spirits floating around. (v.42)
- A body that will be like Jesus' body (v.49)

**Luke 24:39-43, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.”**

- What joy fills my heart as I consider this! What great benefit we have as believers!

- Notice the means that God will accomplish this task of raising us up: “By the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”
- He who began a good work in you is not only faithful to complete it, but He is able to do it.
- Our perspective is radically changed when we consider these truths.

**Illus – It is so easy to allow relatively small things block our vision of that which is most important. I can block out the sun with my hand.**

**App – Consider how this changes our perspective on even death. Instead of despair, we have hope. Even in our pain we can have great hope in the Lord.**

### **III. Stand Firm in The Lord**

- Don't be distracted by the change in the chapter, Paul is concluding the thought.

A. Don't back down!

- In light of the truths stated above, Paul exhorts the Philippian believers to STAND FIRM.
- They had adversaries, difficulties, it wasn't easy to be a Christian back then, and it is still difficult today.

**App – Sometimes we are tempted to go AWOL! Either by temptation or trials in life we just want to throw in the towel. God would say today, “Stand Firm.”**

**1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”**

- How do we stand firm?

B. Stand on the promises of God

**App – Believe in God’s Promises. Rest your full weight upon them.**

- Notice that I’m to be standing firm “in the Lord.”

**App – It is not by our might or power that gives us strength to stand, but it is the Lord who strengthens us to stand in the battle.**

**Jude 1:24-25, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”**

**Hebrews 10:23, 35-36, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ...Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”**

- Trust in the Lord! Believe that Jesus is coming back, put your hope in Him.

- Believe that He is going to transform you into the likeness of Christ

**Isaiah 40:28-30, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”**

### Conclusion

**Our perspective is so very important. The day is near when Jesus will come for His church. If we have the wrong perspective we will not live correctly. Let’s not be like the kid on the Max train. Let’s live rightly before the Lord and stand on these promises.**