

Philippians 10-08-20

Let's pick up our study now in the book of Philippians. We're right at the end of chapter three. And we have seen Paul talking about the example of Jesus Christ.

The theme that has run through this book is the difference between someone who is in tune with God's plan and someone who isn't. It's more than just believer, unbeliever. It's more than just spiritual versus carnal in the realm of being a believer.

It is, do you have this attitude that was in Christ Jesus? Do you have the attitude that's reflected in the example of Paul? Where life is fun and life is interesting and life is exciting because of the spiritual aspect, because of the heavenly perspective. It ought to make a difference. We ought to see things differently because we're believers.

Well-informed believers, biblically astute believers. We know what's going on. We know what to expect.

We know what God is up to. We know why things happen the way they do. We know why the world is on the course that it's on.

We know and are comforted by that knowledge. So in this last section, as I mentioned, the chapter break is really in an unfortunate place. I think you see this even in your New King James where you've got this be united, joyful, and in prayer.

Do you have that in your New King James right after the beginning of chapter four? And you can see that they share the view that verse one is actually the conclusion of what we have just seen. And that section, Paul says, I have told you often and now tell you even weeping that there are these believers who are enemies of the cross. And that's why he's weeping.

He's not weeping over the pagans. He's not weeping over the ne'er-do-well, godless infidels. He's weeping over those who ought to be growing, who ought to be exploiting all of the great expressions of grace that we have through Christ.

And they're not. Instead, they are enemies of the cross. Their fate, their ultimate destination is destruction.

Apolia, this is the same word used of Judas. And I've gone round and round over the years with different ones about, you know, are some of these horribly wrong-headed people, even believers at all, who are in outer darkness, who weep and wail and gnash their teeth and so on. The Bible speaks clearly about the severity of God.

He is gracious. He is also severe. He reserves grace and compassion for generation after generation of those who love him.

And he will pursue and judge and eliminate those who hate him. That's how God is. He is the God of the Old Testament as well as the God of the New Testament.

He is light and in him is no darkness at all. And there is this feel-good syndrome that pervades certainly our modern American society where we just want to be Pollyanna. We want to think that everything is rosy and good.

We want to be in the Willy Wonka chocolate factory or however you want to look at it. You know, Sammy Davis Jr., everything is beautiful. The candy man can and it makes the world taste good.

And it's just all sugary and it isn't. And believers will be judged. It is the judgment seat of Christ as I've mentioned many times.

So these people of whom Paul speaks, he says, note those who walk correctly. Note those who are a good example, who walk the way Paul walks, who think the way Paul thinks because there are many others walking and this is a walk of believers, but they are wayward. They are backsliders.

They are reversionists, whatever you want to call them. They have departed the path whose God is their emotion. And it doesn't say their emotion, whose God is emotion.

Theirs and others. They just think that feeling good is the ultimate goal and glory in their shame, setting their mind on earthly things. This is the great privilege and great heritage we have to get our minds up out of the mundane, to see things from a wider view.

Most of the debate that you hear, most of the argumentation, most of the philosophical and political differences that you find are due to degrees of perspective. How myopic is someone? How close to a thing are they to where they can't see beyond it? You're discriminating against me because I'm a minority. You're hurting me and I don't like it.

Can't see what else might be going on. I mean, a child of three can engage in this kind of thinking. You're denying me something I want.

You're mean, I hate you. You're hurting me. I don't understand.

This is childish, immature thinking. Maturity is being able to step back and see things in a context, to be altruistic, to be self-sacrificing. This is not the province of children.

This is the province of adults. You can look at the mosque controversy in New York City. Why is there such a heated debate about whether or not the Muslims ought to be able to build a mosque near ground zero? You hear arguments pro and con, and initially some of these arguments sound persuasive.

Well, the rest of the country has no business telling New York City what it can and can't do

around ground zero. What about that argument? Is it just up to New York City? I would submit to you that if you step back and take a larger perspective, there is something bigger than the city of New York in view. Why do you think the terrorists attacked New York City? Because it is symbolic.

Why did they fly the planes into the Twin Towers? Why did they shoot for the Pentagon? And I think they had one going for the White House. Did they not? Why? Because they thought that that would cause the most operational damage to us? They are symbols. The Twin Towers are symbols.

The Pentagon is a symbol. White House is a symbol. It was a symbolic attack.

It certainly did a lot of devastation. What, 2,819 people murdered? But it's all about symbolism. And you can't now start ignoring the symbolism of that spot and the symbolism of a mosque and juxtaposing one symbol over another.

Let me ask you this. If it's all about freedom and the Constitution and everybody should be free to build where they want and do what they want, well, I would like to stick a great giant cross on top of the mosque over here in Richardson. Do you think they'll have any problem with that? It's just two pieces of wood at right angles.

What's the problem? The problem is the cross is a symbol and it means something to people. The mosque is a symbol and it means something. Ground zero is a symbol and it means something.

There are over 1,200 mosques in the United States all over the place. But in the same way, and I've made this point elsewhere, in the same way that I would think it would be inappropriate for us to go over and raise a monument to the Army Air Force in Nagasaki or Hiroshima, I would like to make a big monument to the Enola Gay here in Hiroshima. I'd like to honor the pilots who faithfully carried out their mission and all pilots who carried out their faithful bombing.

And I'd like to set it up in Nagasaki, if you don't mind. In the same way that I don't think the McVeigh family ought to have a big family reunion in Oklahoma City at the side of the Murrah building. Well, all you McVeighs come together and let's have a party at the Murrah building.

I don't broad brush everybody named McVeigh as being in sympathy with Timothy McVeigh who set that bomb off and killed people, including some Marines of my acquaintance. I think pilots who carry out their mission in the military are honorable, whatever service. I think the zero pilots that carried out their mission did an honorable thing.

They served their country. It's patriotic. Ours is not to reason why, that's somebody else's job.

If you're a pilot, be the best pilot you can be. There were Christian pilots in the Luftwaffe and they flew for their country and did the best job they could. God bless them.

It's not their place to be a conscientious objector or something. But do I wanna set up a monument to honorable Christian German soldiers at Auschwitz or Dachau or Bergen-Belsen? Would that be appropriate? Why not? Because you're clashing symbols. You have a symbol of great criminal wrongdoing.

You have a symbol of great horrific destruction. And whatever else you wanna say, the nuclear bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that is horrific levels of destruction. Whatever side you come down on, on the rightness or wrongness of dropping them, that is a horrific level of destruction.

And those places will forever be a symbol of a new level of man-on-man destruction. And there are certain things you would and would not appropriately do in that place. And freedom is not the issue.

Religion is not the issue. The constitution and that is not the issue. Oh, aren't we better than that? Aren't we, can't we? It's symbolism.

And people who can't back up and see the larger issue argue differently. This is my view. I don't normally use a political example, but that one's on my mind.

In the same way, Paul says, look, here is an example. Jesus Christ is an example. The apostle Paul is an example.

He says, live this way. Note those who live this way, join them. Don't set your mind on earthly things.

These other people are also an example who have emotion as their God. It's all about feeling good. By the way, people who don't live in New York City, but who insist that the Muslims should be able to build the mosque at ground zero.

Why do they advocate that? Are they really hounds for the fulfillment of the constitution? I ask myself as I consider the eligibility question, are we really that dedicated to the constitution? Every jot and tittle. Is that why they're doing it? It's a feel good. Look at what a magnanimous, yes, you can murder over 2,800 people, but that's okay.

I know that that was just terrorists and all Muslims are not the same. That's fine. All McVeigh's are not Oklahoma City bombers.

All Oswald's are not presidential assassins. All German soldiers were not Holocaust perpetrators. It doesn't change the fact that you don't honor the group at a place where members of that group perpetrated something that is of great symbolic value.

I am not gonna try to build a church in downtown Mecca. Why would I do that? Do I really think

their needs, is there just a crying need? Are there Christians? Are there Christians wandering around in Mecca, can't find a church? Are there Muslims in New York City that can't find a place to put their rug down and bow toward the East? Is this meeting a need? No, it's symbolic. Why do you think the Muslims wanna build one near ground zero? Why have they petitioned and asked for it? Because it's symbolic.

It's all about symbolism. It's all about what it means. Same thing here.

What does it mean? What is your thought? How far back are you willing to look? Wouldn't it be great if you're David in the wilderness or Joseph in prison or Elijah by the brook Cherith or Job in the ash heap or any one of a number of others, Daniel and his three friends right after they were emasculated and shoved into the Babylonian education system. Wouldn't it be great if God could have revealed to them the grand perspective and show them what their life was gonna be like and how meaningful it would be for untold millions of subsequent believers. But God didn't.

They took it on faith. They used the perspective that they had available to them. That's what we are called to.

Not to set our mind on earthly things. All of the aforementioned individuals would have failed if they had their minds set on earthly things. Every one of them would have failed.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for. It's what you don't see in the earthly realm. And in verse 20, it says, for our citizenship is in heaven.

Humongar ta palatuma in uranois huparque. Our citizenship, and it doesn't just say is in heaven, huparque, you know, amy is the word for is, to be. To be or not to be, that's amy or may amy.

But this is huparque. And this is a stronger word. And I like the word order in Greek because it literally says, after you get past the beginning of the sentence, for our citizenship in heaven exists.

Our citizenship in heaven exists. Think about it. Our citizenship in heaven is real.

Our citizenship in heaven matters. And that's really the force of huparque here. Huparque means that something is present.

It's existential. It exists. It is a current possession from which also savior, ap ek dekamatha, from which.

So it says our citizenship in heaven exists. From which? Now, what does which refer to? From which? Is which the citizenship or is the which heaven? Well, in English, it looks like our citizenship is in heaven from which heaven we await, right? But in Greek, this is a little bit different because you have a masculine plural, the heavens is how this is in Greek. I'm pausing for effect.

I'm casting my line to grab your attention and draw it back to myself, back to me, back to me. Heavens is plural, which is singular. Everybody say that with me.

Heaven is plural, which is singular. From which? From which heavenly citizenship? Which refers to the concept. Citizenship, by the way, Palatum is a neuter.

But our in the heavens, our citizenship in the heavens, from which? It's not just heaven is gonna open and our savior is gonna fall out. This is, it's a part of our citizenship, okay? I don't know how else to get this across. But from which also, soteria, a savior, the savior.

You know, it kind of works backwards in Greek. When you have the article, it's sort of normal. And when you don't have the article, that means it's a specific thing.

It's more emphatic when the article is not there. There is no article here. From which also the savior.

Then we have apekdekomai, which means to eagerly expect. Think of something that you have recently eagerly expected, eagerly anticipated. It's most of the students listening to the sound of my voice, it's kind of the reverse.

They were eagerly expecting the end of the school year a few months ago, and now they are not so eagerly awaiting the inception of the school year for a couple of minutes already started. But it's kind of the reverse. This is not apekdekomai, it's just the opposite.

But at some point you eagerly expect. When I was a plebe, we had to count the days to Thanksgiving and Christmas and second class ring dance and the first class graduation. And you had to give those number of days and you count down, you wait, you expect.

Counting the days when you're off on a overseas deployment and you start getting short, it's so many days until you leave and you get down to that last month and you can hardly get any useful work out of somebody because I just don't care, I will be gone. I don't have to start this training schedule for next month because I won't be here. You guys can mess with that.

And the pack starts slipping off and the gaze goes elsewhere. Apekdekomai, eager, earnest expectation. This is not casually, well, won't that be nice? This is, I can't wait.

So it's more like our heavenly citizenship is that from which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, why does it use this Palatuma? What goes on in fellowship? I want to give you an interesting to me, excerpt from a guy named Wilhelmus A. Brockle. And that's the main reason I wanted to quote him is just because of his name.

No, Wilhelmus A. Brockle. Because I was talking about this to a couple of different people earlier in the week. I think it is a great privilege to be involved in the ministry of God's word in whatever form because it is something that transcends your own life and your own existence and your own

personal the accomplishments or whatever else.

If you can be involved in the promulgation and proliferation of the word of God, that is just a great thing. Wilhelmus A. Brockle was born in 1635. He was a Dutch guy, Dutch reformed.

He's part of what's known as the second Dutch or the Dutch second reformation. You know, there was the initial thing that started shortly after Luther and Calvin. And this, so this is in the 1600s.

He lives most of his life in the late 1600s and his great work that he wrote is called, and I'll slaughter the Dutch here, but it's *De Redelijk Gadsdienst*, which is in English, the Christian's reasonable service. This is a book that is available. I think you can, it's, you know, 400 odd years old.

And I want to read you a little bit of what he says in it that pertains to our citizenship in heaven. This is a really interesting book and it's sort of a mini, now think about this. This is a guy before computers, before the Dead Sea Scrolls, before JEPD, he's working from his early Bible.

And he wrote a theology that covers the doctrine in this magnum opus, the Christian's reasonable service. He starts out, the first section is the doctrine of God. And he's got nine chapters on the knowledge of God from nature, the word of God, the essence of God, the divine persons, the decrees of God.

And of course, because he's reformed, he gets into eternal predestination, election and reprobation, redemption, the creation of the world, angels and devils. And that's his theology section. Then he talks about anthropology.

So God first and then man. And in the man section, which is chapters 10 through 15, you have the soul of man, the providence or provision of God for man. You have the covenant of works.

Of course, he's reformed. And the breach of the covenant of works, which puts man in his fallen and need for salvation type of state, origin of sin, original and actual sin, man's free will or impotency and the punishment due upon sin. And that's a really interesting chapter, which I don't have time to go into, but chapter 15, man's free will.

The early reformed guys had a better grip on free will than your later reformed guys. It's quite interesting that there seems to have been a deterioration in understanding from the earlier days in some cases. Then he gets into Christology.

Chapter 16 through 23 is Christology and high priestly office of Christ, kingly office of Christ, Christ's humiliation, which we just had in Philippians, the state of Christ's exaltation. Then we get into the part we're gonna look at tonight, at least in brief, which is ecclesiology, study the church. And in chapters 24 through 29, he has a matter concerning the church, the duty to join the church and to remain with her, the communion of believers with Christ and with each other.

This is chapter 26. And this I think is a real interesting section. And let me just read you a little bit of what he said.

And keep in mind, this guy is writing, you know, three and a half hundred years ago. The Lord Jesus not only gives many and excellent benefits to his church, but he and his church mutually belong to each other, are united with each other and exercise communion with each other. All of which is wondrous beyond comparison.

These three elements comprehend all true felicity. Felicity is happiness. All true believers are the property of Christ and Christ is the property of all true believers.

This is indicated by the possessive pronouns, mine and his, which so frequently are employed in the Song of Solomon, as well as in many other texts. My beloved is mine and I am his, Song of Solomon 2.16. This is first of all based and founded upon a gift. The father has given them to the son.

Thine they were and thou gavest them to me, John 17.6. You and I are a gift from the father to the son. We belong to him. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance in the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession, Psalm 2.8. The father has likewise given the son to believers.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, Isaiah 9.6. And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Ephesians 1.22. So that's one of the three elements of our great felicity that we are given to Christ, Christ has given to us. Secondly, this is based and founded upon purchase. For Jesus obtained them at great expense.

He purchased them with his blood. He has paid the price and they are thus his property in full conformity to the law. For thou was slain and has redeemed us to God by thy blood, Revelation 5.9. Thirdly, this is based and founded upon victory.

Believers were once in the power of Satan, being in his snare and taken captive by him at his will. By his death, the Lord Jesus has conquered and bound the devil, delivering the elect from his power and translating them into his kingdom. Quote, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, Hebrews 2.14 and 15.

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted and divided his spoils. Remember Jesus talking about that in Luke chapter 11, verses 21 and 22.

Fourthly, and this is all impinging on our citizenship. What is it that ought to feed this? It's one thing to say, don't forget about your heavenly citizenship and we're awaiting the savior. It's something else to put substance to that.

What is the actual matter of that citizenship? This is what it is. We are Christ's, he is ours. He has purchased us and we belong to him.

It is based on his victory at the cross. And fourthly, it is based and founded on marriage. In a marriage covenant, both parties become the property of each other by way of mutual surrender.

This is also true of this relationship. Yea, I swear unto thee and entered into a covenant with thee saith the Lord God and thou became as mine. That's Ezekiel 16, 8. In Hosea 2, 19 and 20, references made to this marriage covenant.

We read there, and I shall betroth thee unto me forever. This covenant can therefore never be broken, nor can the partakers of this covenant ever be separated from him. Our citizenship is irrevocable.

Yea, I shall betroth thee unto me in righteousness. It has the father's approbation and it is his delight. As a consequence of Christ's suffering and death, they have been translated into a state wherein they can approach unto God, whose justice has truly been satisfied and become his children in Christ and in judgment.

That is to keep them as the apple of his eye and to take vengeance upon all who offend them and in loving kindness and in mercies. This is all Hosea 2, 19 and 20. This entire transaction is marked by love, friendliness, goodness, and beneficence.

I shall even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness. That is, I shall do so in truth, faithfully, and with certainty, and thus never leave you nor forsake you. And thou shalt know the Lord.

I shall enlighten the eyes of your understanding. I shall reveal myself to you and cause you to see and to taste all my beauty. What does it mean to be a citizen? What is Paul talking about when he says, our in heaven citizenship? What's he talking about? It is a big deal.

It is based and founded upon surrender. Our author says here, from the side of the believer, there is likewise a heartfelt, total, and absolute surrender, doing so without any reservation. Notice he's not hung up on pervenient grace and God effectively moving.

He says, you've got to acquiesce. You submit. Submit yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time.

From the side of the believer, there is likewise a heartfelt, total, and absolute surrender, doing so without any reservation. They yield themselves unto the Lord. Second Chronicles 30, verse eight.

One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord. Isaiah 44, five. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord and the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance.

Psalm 33, 12. He goes on, and here's a direct reference to our citizenship. This is titled, the nature of the union between Christ and his church.

Our citizenship, our heavenly citizenship, is not something that's spoken of in the Old Testament. It's prefigured. It's shadowed in what God says to Israel.

Some of those were Old Testament references. I will betroth you to myself and so on, but they're shadows of the reality that you and I enjoy as members of the body and bride of Christ. Now, what is the nature of that union? Well, it is our palatuma privilege, our palatuma heavenly citizenship.

Old Testament saints are not called heavenly citizens. They're not. Their kingdom is of the earth.

Their promises and covenant fulfillments are the earthly kingdom, the millennial kingdom, the throne of David, the land, a portion to the tribes, as we saw in Ezekiel, the temple and place of worship and sacrifice and priesthood as we saw in the book of Ezekiel. They will rise up and their bones will be covered with sinews and flesh, and they will breathe earthly life. That's Israel's immediate future.

Now, they're going to catch up after the millennium, as you know, kingdom of the father. But our citizenship, when we leave this life, we partake of this citizenship that is heavenly. It is of the heavens.

It doesn't mean we're going to live in heaven. It is heavenly, comes from God as its source. The nature of the union between Christ and his church, Wilhelmus Brockle says, this belonging to each other also implies union.

When Paul says, let this mind be in you, this attitude, this thinking, follow this example, this is the nature. What does it mean to be in union with Christ? We say, well, it's positional union. Positionally, we have died with Christ positionally.

Positionally doesn't really help me when I'm trying to get through the day and do what's right. It's experiential union that I need. Well, that's what we're talking about here.

The nature of this union is inexpressible and can better be experienced by the believer than expressed in words. This union is neither one of essence as the divine persons are unified or one, nor personal as the human nature being assumed by Christ as a divine person. This union is neither one of mixture as water and wine are mixed, nor does a transformation take place as if believers would become Christ himself and thus would become God or Christ.

This union is not a sacramental union, such as the union between the bread and wine of the Lord's supper with the body and blood of Christ, nor is it merely an external relationship. This guy, if you're not catching anything else, he's writing in 1650-something, 1660-something, you know,

the 1600s. The pilgrims came over in 1620.

This guy, he is a contemporary of the old Puritans. But look at the sophistication of his biblical knowledge, his perspicacity, his perception of biblical truth. It's amazing.

It's profound. He is digging some really great gems out of the word of God. How many people do you find today talking about the nature of our union with Christ in these terms? It's not a mixture.

It's not a merging of essence. It's not a sacrament, nor is it an external relationship. It also does not consist in the believer's conformity to Christ in the way of sanctification.

It's not just you act like Christ so you're in union with Christ. Rather, this union is established, number one, by the indwelling of the spirit of Christ in believers. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you, 1 Corinthians 3.16. I love how Wilhelmus always gets back to scripture.

This is what the Bible says. Your union in Christ isn't a notion. It's not a feel-good.

It's not an abstract. It's not some sort of a spiritualized thing. It is substantial, and it is implemented by the indwelling of the spirit of Christ, 1 Corinthians 3.16. Secondly, by spiritual marriage, this is a recognized union in the sight of God the Father.

God the Father considers us as one with Christ. That's why he can be our righteousness, our peace, and our sanctification. When God looks at us, he sees the merit of Christ.

That's a real legal standing-type union. It's a legal standing we have in the eyes of God. That's Ezekiel 16.8, Hosea 2.19 and 20.

Third, this union is established by faith, which by its very nature unites, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, Ephesians 3.17. Fourth, it is by love, which due to its very nature cannot tolerate separation, but seeks the most intimate of unions. My Father shall love him, and we shall come unto him and make our abode with him, John 14.23. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Romans 8.35. This union is therefore real, essential, true, complete, without any reservation, eternally inseparable, spiritual, and without any corporal dimension. I have read a lot of old stuff from the 1600s and 1700s and 1800s, and you rarely find somebody with this much meat in what they write in those days.

It's stunningly great. I was bowled over. There's a lot of devotional, there's a lot of abstraction, there's a lot of meandering around.

This guy just hammers the spikes one by one straight into the board. Scripture refers to this union by means of several expressions and explains it by way of various comparisons. Scripture refers to this union as, keep in mind, this union with Christ.

This is our citizenship. It's not Old Testament, it's not Millennial Kingdom, it's unique to the church. It's unique, this is a synonym.

Heavenly citizenship, this is what it means, this is what it is. Being one, he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit, 1 Corinthians 6.17. We have been planted together, Romans 6.5. Secondly, putting on Christ, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 13.14. Third, being rooted in Christ, rooted and built up in him. It's that great passage in Colossians 2.7. Fourth, being mutually in each other.

Christ is and lives in believers, I in them, John 17.23. And he goes on from there. There's huge amounts of documentation in here. There's a long paragraph of scriptural quotes for being mutually in Christ and Christ in us.

We live in him, he lives in us. Scripture expresses the intimacy of this union by a variety of comparisons. It compares it to marriage, to the union of a body with the head, a tree and its branches, a house built up by uniting many stones, as a consequence of belonging to each other and the resulting union.

And here, this is the punchline and my final point for the night. There will of necessity be communion. Because of union with Christ, there is communion.

That is the exercise and utilization of this relationship. It is one thing to be married status-wise, it is something else to exercise and utilize that relationship, to exploit it, to avail yourself of it, to wind it up and make it go, right? This communion is both with the person of Jesus Christ and with his benefits. And he goes on and talks about this in great detail.

Scripture speaks when talking about the person of Christ of receiving him, believing in him, trusting in him, living in him, loving him and hoping in him. And I could do a lesson on each one of those. Receiving, believing, trusting, living in, loving and hoping in him.

And he goes and gives a plethora of passages on those. Not only are we partakers of Christ in those six aspects, those six ways, but we are united with and partakers of all of his benefits. We have communion with him in his nature, Hebrews 2.11. Both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one father, for which reason he's not ashamed to call them brethren.

They have fellowship with his sonship. His satisfaction of the justice of God is their satisfaction. His perfect obedience and accomplishment of the law is their holiness.

And this renders them perfect before God. His intercession and high priestly appearance before the throne of grace is on their behalf. Christ's glory is their glory.

The spirit of Christ is their spirit. I'm going paragraph by paragraph, topic, sentence only. He's got copious scriptural references for each one of these.

The power of Jesus is their power and they may take hold thereof as their own and be active therewith. In one word, we may conclude that all the benefits of the covenant of grace are their benefits and all the fullness of Christ is theirs. Finally, they also have fellowship with his suffering and become partakers of it, which is their great glory.

If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, 1 Peter 4, 14. He goes on to talk about, because of all of these wonderful things of partaking of the person of Christ and partaking of the benefits of Christ, our communion with him and with one another, this is why we are exhorted time and again. What is the real great commission? What is the real purpose and goal and first and foremost command for believers in the church age? It's not Matthew 28, 19, and 20.

It is to seek communion with Christ because in seeking and finding that, we fulfill all of these commands. We will follow his example. We will see the glass as half full.

We will look out not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others. This mind will be in us that was in Christ Jesus, who for the joy that was before him endured the cross despising the shame, emptied himself, took on the form of a servant. He's now seated at the right hand of the father.

That's the privilege of heavenly citizenship. And it's just touching the hem of the garment. It doesn't begin to comprehend it.

If you want a full exercise in looking at many more of the attributes and benefits of that citizenship, get this book. I think you can find, I haven't looked, but I think you can probably get a public domain copy of it by Wilhelmus Brockle. It is called the Christian's Reasonable Service.

And when you get to ecclesiology and you get to the communion of believers, chapter 26, the communion of believers with Christ and with each other, I have not ever seen a better, more complete summary. You can overlook the occasional covenant of grace. Hey, nobody's perfect.

I screw things up all the time. And I'll overlook the occasional reformed reference because the distillation of divine truth in these chapters is amazing, especially considering its antiquity. But this is golden fruit from the word of God, ripe for the picking.

And it is a great, great summary of what this Paulatuma privilege is. So Paul concludes by saying, therefore, my beloved and longed for brethren, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord. Stand fast in the Lord.

That's our communion. That's our partaking of him and all of his benefits. Stand fast in that.

Don't be moved. Love that old gospel song. I shall not be, I shall not be moved.

Just like a tree planted by the waters, I shall not be moved. Stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

Notice beloved is in there twice.

Remember what Abrakel said earlier about how love is part of the implementation of this union. It's the love of God. We love because he first loved us.

That's what creates our communion. Faith, hope, and love drive that whole reality of citizenship. So it's a great, great thing to meditate on.

It's one thing to say, oh yeah, I'm a citizen of heaven. I got my salvation. It's something else to explore.

We have just barely touched. I have raced. I have skimmed at 65 miles an hour the tops of the waves here of the depth of what the word of God has to say just in the New Testament about what we have in Christ.

It's profound. Well, Paul is going to move forward when we come back next time to, as he always does in his letters, to practical application. This is where the rubber is really gonna meet the road.

We have surveyed his theological argument and his profound doctrinal case that he makes in the first three chapters. Now in chapter four, he's gonna say, you wanna know the answer to the question, so what? Here it is. And he's gonna begin by imploring specific individuals to do certain things.

And then he's gonna broaden out and talk about what the body of believers as a whole should be doing. This is what you should do in the light of this truth. It's gonna be a great, great thing for us to study.

And that's what we'll pick up next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you so much for granting us the grace and the privileges of heavenly citizenship through Christ and in Christ.

We are so undeserving. And so without any redeeming quality of any kind, and yet as a manifestation of your power and your glory and a reflection of your character, you have seen fit to include us in your plan and purpose, to take us who are so far below the angels and certainly below the level of your perfection and raise us up in Christ and seat us in the heavenly places in him. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will make these things real to us and impress them in our hearts in such a way that we will recognize their value.

And as a result, we'll be motivated and encouraged to live the remainder of the time that is allotted to us in the light of these heavenly truths. And as a result, we will stand fast and stand firm and be worthy to reflect your glory at the judgment and in the ages to come. We pray all these things in Jesus' name, amen.