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CITIZENS OF ??

Checked your passport lately? That official document certifies your identity and citizenship. It also makes you an unofficial representative of your nation. So how are you doing with that?

The Apostle Paul, a Roman citizen, talks about citizenship in Philippians 3:17-21. "**Join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.**" Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus were a team of fellow soldiers on mission as official representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. You do well to follow their example.

Paul is no "do as I say not as I do" kind of guy. He practices what he preaches. His walk follows his talk which matches the model he wrote about in Philippians 2. If you are a believer in Christ, then you have the "mind of Christ" and so you can, like Christ, put the needs of others ahead of your own. In humility and obedience to God, you can fulfill Christ's purposes instead of our own personal pursuits.

Paul also tells you how to spot who to avoid. "**For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.**" They downplay the cross. They emphasize regulations, not a living relationship with the Savior whose own blood paid the penalty for your sins. And they dilute the gospel. They burden you with religious works, instead of showing you how to receive the grace of God in Christ through faith, and live for Him by His power.

His letter to the Philippians talks a lot about these false teachers. Here Paul uses even more vivid language in a heart-felt warning about self-serving self-centered imposters who are still around today!

Verse 19, "**their end is destruction**"...what they're preaching has no future..."**their god is their belly**"...it's all about sensual appetites and pleasures of the here and now. They don't worship Christ, they worship themselves..."**they glory in their shame**"...they're proud of what they should be ashamed of..."**with minds set on earthly things**"...they haven't experienced how Jesus sets you free from sin and self, giving you the "mind of Christ" to humbly work out the grace that God works in you.

In contrast, verse 20, "**but our citizenship is in heaven.**" Paul uses the word "citizenship" in Philippians 1:27 where he says "let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." This paints a powerful word picture for the Philippians, who had become a colony of the Roman empire, and who prided themselves in the advantages of Roman citizenship.

Are you a Christian? Then Heaven is where your real life is. So you should be putting your time and energy and resources toward advancing God's kingdom, not earthly pleasures. Life is not about your pursuits or possessions or power or position or prestige. It's all about Christ.

Today, you are an alien and temporary resident of earth, here with a passport for the purposes of the sovereign King who saved you and sends you to represent Him, until He takes you home to His eternal spiritual realm. Verse 21, "**from heaven we await our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body.**"

Should earthly appetites consume those who are destined for heaven? You are to glorify Christ, not yourselves. Because He has given you "the mind of Christ" to guide you until you inherit glorified bodies to live in His presence forever.

He will do that "**by the power that enables Him to subject all things to Himself.**" For believers, in your past you were deformed by sin, then reformed by grace. Lost then found. New creations. In your present, your new minds are progressively being conformed to be like Him, as you live according to Scripture by the power of the Holy Spirit. Your future is to be completely transformed, body, soul, mind and spirit.

So that today, citizens of heaven, you show & tell the good news about Jesus to everyone around you!