

A LIVING CHURCH FOR A DYING WORLD

April 21st Devotional

HEAVENS' CITIZENS, LIVING AS UNWANTED IMMIGRANTS

Devotional Scriptures:

Philippians 3:20; Acts 16:36-38; Ephesians 2:11-12; 19



Study and Reflection:

One way to translate Philippians 3:20 is ‘our manner of life’ is in harmony with heaven. By definition a “Resident Alien” is a foreign national living on an official basis in a country of which they are not a citizen. In essence it is an individual who has *immigrated* from their native land in order to take up residence for a particular purpose.

Most often these who are categorized as such find it difficult to function in this different location as they are alien or foreign to its customs and culture. While in some cases there are similarities of the immigrant’s homeland to the foreign land there is often the internal longing of the Resident Alien to return to his or her country of origin.

Jesus taught His followers that they have now taken on the identity and citizenship of another kingdom different from the one that they currently lived in. He wanted them to identify with the rules and culture of the new kingdom which would most often cause them to be outcast in their current places of residence. They would become “Resident Aliens” and this identity would cause conflict as they sought to live out the purpose of their pilgrimage. Those in the environment around them would not embrace them nor should they lose their identity and seek to find acceptance.

The Church’s residency is in the Kingdom of God and as citizens we are Resident Aliens in this world. We are to live in this world as those who realize that this world is not our home, that we are strangers and pilgrims passing through. That we are here in this world on assignment, on mission, called to demonstrate through our lives what the kingdom of God looks like everywhere we go.

Action Items:

As I shared with the church a few weeks ago, I recently sent in my U.S. passport for renewal. I had to go to a specific authorized website and fill out and verify certain things about myself in order to have my passport renewed. I realized that not everyone who applied for a passport or renewal received a favorable affirmation.

It made me realize how blessed I was and we are to be ‘citizens of heaven.’

The apostle Paul reminds us that citizenship in certain countries is something of high value to be appreciated and cherished (Acts 16:36-38; Ephesians 2:19)

How much do you value and cherish your citizenship? How devoted are you to the country from which you came? Does your life reflect to yourself and others your allegiance to Christ Jesus and His Kingdom?

Involving Others:

Again, be brave. Be bold. Be courageous. Discuss with others how you feel about your status as unwanted immigrants. Could it be that I/we are so comfortable being a part of this world that we may have compromised our alliance and loyalty to the true King?