

CONVERSATION GUIDE:

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What does citizenship mean to you in your daily life?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does Paul's use of citizenship language challenge our view of Christian living?
- What does it mean to "live worthy of the Gospel" in today's context?
- Think about a time when something was difficult that you went through, did you do it alone or with others? How is there a difference in walking alone and with others?
- How can we support each other in standing firm together?
- What role does community play in living out our heavenly citizenship?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Identify areas where you might be trying to live the Christian life alone.
- Consider how you can better engage with and support your Christian community.
- Reflect on what it means to be a "citizen of heaven" first in your daily choices.

GROUP FOCUS:

- Share experiences of standing firm together in faith.
- Discuss practical ways to support each other in struggles.
- Pray for strength to live as citizens of heaven in all circumstances.



WEEK 9 THE JOY OF CITIZENSHIP (PHILIPPIANS 1:27)

TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 1:27

Philippians 1:21-23

Philippians 1:27-30

Ephesians 2:10

Acts 3:6

Acts 23

Romans 8:29

MARCH 9, 2025

WEEK 9 THE JOY OF CITIZENSHIP

Paul has spoken to the Philippians about his suffering and hardship. We saw how Paul walked through and defined what real life truly is (Phil 1:21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*). Paul may only see a glimmer of what God is doing, but he also doesn't expect to see the whole picture; he knows God is so much higher and greater than he could imagine. In the first 26 verses of Chapter 1, Paul has been talking about his own struggle and feelings. Starting in verse 27, Paul turns the tables and says, "This is no longer about *my* suffering...it is about yours."

Phil 1:27-30 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...What does it mean to "be worthy?" The context of Paul's word choice is important because Paul is referring to citizenship when he says, "**Let your manner of life be worthy...**" Paul uses a word that we get our word "*politic*" from. Paul is saying that everything we know about living in a worthy manner centers on our citizenship.

Only Let... Phil 1:27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ... "Only let" essentially means "whatever happens." When this word sits in front of the word for citizenship, it creates an urgency of singlemindedness. We sometimes say we will follow Jesus no matter what happens; like the disciple, Peter, however, our commitment often wavers. Does our commitment stand in the hard, difficult, and scary times? Paul says if we have any hope of living in this "worthy manner," we have to trust Jesus in the "whatever happens" of life.

Your Citizenship - your manner of life... this is the only place Paul uses this specific word for citizenship in his letters. Paul was a real person and it's important to consider his mindset/intent in his writing. The Philippians lived in a different context by being a Roman colony. They enjoyed a special citizenship in Rome. Paul uses this very idea to point to walking and living in God's kingdom. Paul tells us that our citizenship belongs to God alone—which is liberating and exciting! When Paul uses this word for the Philippians, it points to a community that has centered itself around a common hope—flourishing in the love of God's eternal kingdom today.

Not paripateo – There is something that true citizenship requires of us: community and commitment There is a tension we hold as Christians:

1. We are saved individually.
2. We are saved into a community of people (who are also saved individually), living as citizens together in a larger, more beautiful kingdom.

Paul is painting a picture for the Philippians by relating it to their citizenship in Rome. Our hope and our mission are defined by the reality of Christ.

Side by Side - standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel... "Side by side" is not just a spatial co-existence; Paul is talking about the union we have with Christ. We become connected with others in a way we can't define or describe. The moment we stop needing one another is the moment we lose our ability to represent the identity that we find in Christ. "**Let your manner of life be worthy**" requires us to do battle with and for one another. There is a unity that only comes from the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
