

Sermon Series: "If we are the Body . . ."—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—7/2/2006

Title: "Living out our citizenships"

Text: Philippians 3: 20-21 and Romans 13: 1-7

Intro.: *Ills.: Model Citizen (Mother Theresa)*

Theme: Living as citizens of two kingdoms, an earthly and heavenly one, Scripture encourages us to respect God-placed rule and allow our heavenly citizenship to transform the way we live among our fellow-earthly citizens.

The Two Kingdom Theology of the Bible

- Remembering we are in the world but not of the world
 1. *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. John 17: 16*
 2. *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." John 18: 36*
 3. *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 2 Cor. 10:3-4*
- Respectful of the world's law and rule as an extension of God's preservation (**Print and read Romans 13: 1-7**)
 1. Avoiding Theocracy Theology
 - a. An offshoot of Calvin's Protestantism in Basil, Switzerland
 - b. Leading to abuses of Europe which drove immigrants to America to establish separation of church/state freedom
 - c. Destroys the purpose and function of both kingdoms (**Kingdom of Power vs. Grace**)
 2. Understanding the two distinctive roles of the State and Church
 - a. God instituted the state **to establish peace and order**— *Would you like to live without being afraid of the government? Do what is right, and it will praise you. The government has the right to carry out the death sentence. It is God's servant, an avenger to execute God's anger on anyone who does what is wrong. vs. 3,4*
 - b. God instituted the church **to proclaim the life-changing gospel** – *How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? . . .So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. Rom 10: 14,17*
- Redeemed in perspective we see stable government as an advantage to spreading God's grace kingdom
 1. Understanding that we cannot legislate redeemed behavior into other citizens
 - a. *He made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter of the law but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Cor. 3:6*
 - b. Examples of recent legislation on abortion, marriage, flag-burning, etc.
 2. Participate as citizens of our country, who happen, also, to be Christians, to bring about godly change
 - a. **Ills.: The Difference Faith makes**
 - b. Not neglecting our duty as heaven's citizens to extend its influence to our neighbors, friends, coworkers, family

Living as citizens of our heavenly Kingdom—FIRST (Print and read Philippians 3: 20-21)

- In matters of priority and loyalty
 1. *"We are citizens of heaven" — ownership, pride, enthusiasm, defense*
 - a. **Ills.: Indy Star article on patriotism**
 2. When we must make a choice our loyalty lies with God and his kingdom
 - a. *"We must obey God rather than men." Acts 5: 29*
 - b. **Ills.: Which citizenship do you obey**
- In matters of purpose and perspective
 1. *"From which we eagerly wait for a Savior." vs. 20*
 2. Our freedom in Jesus is greater than any or all of the collective freedoms which we have in our constitution
 - a. *So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine . . .So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. John 8: 31,36*
 3. Our heavenly citizenship gives purpose and perspective on the earthly citizenship
 - a. We consider ourselves aliens in this land and hope for the time of returning home (**Print Heb 11:13-16**)
 - b. **Ills.: Traveling in abroad**
 - c. We do not become flustered by world events or despondent by personal failure
 - d. *Through his power to bring everything under his authority, he will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorified body. Vs. 21*

Model Citizens

By blood and origin, I am all Albanian. My citizenship is Indian. I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the whole world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to Jesus. **Mother Teresa, quoted by Ruth A. Tucker in Guardians of the Great Commission. Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 17**

The Difference Faith Makes

The Christian life is going to God. In going to God, Christians travel the same ground that everyone else walks on, breathe the same air, drink the same water, shop in the same stores, read the same newspapers, are citizens under the same government, pay the same prices for groceries and gasoline, fear the same dangers, are subject to the same pressures, get the same distresses, are buried in the same ground. The difference is that each step we walk, each breath we breathe, we know we are preserved by God, we know we are accompanied by God, we know we are ruled by God. **Eugene Peterson, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction (Intervarsity Press, 2000), p. 45; submitted by Winn Collier, Seneca, So Americans rank No. 1 in poll of national pride (Jun 28, 2006–Indianapolis Star)**

CHICAGO -- U-S-A! U-S-A! When it comes to national pride, Americans are No. 1, according to a survey of 34 countries' patriotism. Venezuela came in a close second in the survey, released Tuesday by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. People rated how proud they were of their countries in 10 areas: political influence, social security, the way their democracy works, economic success, science and technology, sports, arts and literature, military, history, and fair treatment of all groups in society. **By Megan Reichgott, Associated Press, Copyright Indianapolis Star, 2006. All rights reserved**

Which Citizenship Do You Obey

Augustine wrote his *The City of God* in the 6th century A.D. Rome in Augustine's time was facing something similar to what New York faced in the aftermath of the 911 tragedy. The city had been sacked. It didn't really fall; it had just been violated. It's as if the barbarians attacked to say, "See what we can do?" All of Rome, even the Christians, felt that if the barbarians could do that, there would be nowhere safe. Rome was the center of Christendom and people could not understand how God could have let that happen. Augustine's point was that people were confusing Rome with the City of God. They were seeking their security from the wrong place. While pagan Romans might run and hide, which would only make sense with Rome being such a dangerous place to be all of a sudden, Christians should be different. As citizens of the City of God, there are no weapons or bombs that can threaten a Christian's home, which is heaven. For Christians it was illogical, even wrong, to flee Rome when there were so many needs to be met and no threat to a Christian's true security. **Tim Keller, "Preaching amid Pluralism," Leadership journal, Vol. 24, no. 1 (Winter 2002), p. 34**

Romans 13:1-7

¹Every person should obey the government in power. No government would exist if it hadn't been established by God. The governments which exist have been put in place by God. ²Therefore, whoever resists the government opposes what God has established. Those who resist will bring punishment on themselves. ³People who do what is right don't have to be afraid of the government. But people who do what is wrong should be afraid of it. Would you like to live without being afraid of the government? Do what is right, and it will praise you. ⁴The government is God's servant working for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid. The government has the right to carry out the death sentence. It is God's servant, an avenger to execute God's anger on anyone who does what is wrong. ⁵Therefore, it is necessary for you to obey, not only because you're afraid of God's anger but also because of your own conscience. ⁶That is also why you pay your taxes. People in the government are God's servants while they do the work he has given them. ⁷Pay everyone whatever you owe them. If you owe taxes, pay them. If you owe tolls, pay them. If you owe someone respect, respect that person. If you owe someone honor, honor that person.[GW]

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰We, however, are citizens of heaven. We look forward to the Lord Jesus Christ coming from heaven as our Savior.

²¹Through his power to bring everything under his authority, he will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorified body. [GW]

Hebrews 11:13-16

¹³All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. ¹⁵And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. [NASB]