

A blurred, blue-tinted photograph of several people in a modern office or public space. The figures are out of focus, appearing as dark silhouettes against a bright, overexposed background. They seem to be engaged in conversation or walking through the space. The overall mood is professional and contemporary.

CITIZENS

— PHILIPPIANS —

Philippians will

CHALLENGE

ENCOURAGE

COMFORT

TEACH

AND

INSPIRE US

to live as CITIZENS of
Heaven as residents in this world.”

- *Michael Davis*

USING THIS GUIDE:

Group Leader Instructions

In preparation for each study, take a few moments to read through the instructions below.

BEFORE THE GROUP MEETING:

1. Spend some time in prayer before your group.
2. As you prepare for the study, read over the questions and think through how answering them for yourself could help you better walk with God.
3. Then, try developing two to three practical steps that would help members of your group also walk better with God. Avoid the temptation to simply recount information, but thoughtfully arm your group members with something tangible that they can do throughout the week.
4. In the closing moments of your preparation, ask the Lord to move mightily in your home or group setting. Without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing, and we are utterly dependent upon Him showing up!

DURING THE GROUP MEETING:

1. Begin with prayer. Ask for the Spirit to be present during the group.
2. Attempt to summarize this week's message, in a few, succinct, thoughts.
(See summary below for an example)
3. Assign readers to read various Scripture texts (When applicable).
4. Walk your group through the discussion questions. [Don't feel like you have to cover every question. Some questions will naturally be more relevant to your group than others and will naturally produce more fruitful discussion. Be sensitive to the flow of conversation and either redirect or dwell longer upon a topic when it is necessary].
5. In response to questions, share stories and personal examples of how this has played out in your life. What did you learn? How did it help you walk with God? What fresh stories of God's power, love, mercy, or grace do you now have because you trusted Him?
6. Draw others out to share their own personal stories. What did they learn? What would life look like if they were able to live out this week's truth consistently?
7. End in a time of prayer, thanking God for the truths that He has revealed, and for the people that He has brought to your group.

SERMON SUMMARY

WEEK 3: THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS

Series Purpose:

If you are a Christian, which simply means a follower of Jesus, then you are a CITIZEN of Heaven! This is not something you are working towards, but a REALITY of who you already are in Christ. And as CITIZENS of Heaven, we are called to promote the vision and values of Heaven, even while we are residents here on earth. In this series, we want to look at what heavenly our citizenship looks like and how we can begin living that out in the places that God has called us to reside.

This Week's Summary:

In today's sermon, we began with the understanding that we are citizens of heaven. This is not something we have to earn, but something we already have! And, as a citizen of heaven, we can begin living out the values of heaven, even while we remain on earth. But, how can we live this way?

First, because a true citizen (Jesus) has come and given up His citizenship for us. He laid down His rights and privileges so that we could be welcomed into the family of God. And because of Christ, now we get to be like Him by freely giving our lives to Him and others! **Second**, we can live as citizens of heaven by understanding that GOOD NEWS is always GOOD NEWS! This is not just news for our heads, but news that can penetrate the deepest regions of our hearts. It is the kind of news that affects us, changes us, inspires us, and leaves us differently from how it found us! This is the kind of news that could keep Paul singing in prison, rejoicing in suffering, and praising Him during any trial.

For Paul, the bad news (his circumstances) did not change the good news of the Gospel (his citizenship). Why? Because the good news was not just in his head but had deeply changed his heart! And for us today, we can live as citizens of heaven, not by allowing the bad news to define us, but by allowing the truth of the Gospel to deeply impact our hearts; so much so that it transforms everything we are! What will this look like?

First, when we allow the Gospel to transform our hearts we will be content with any placement! This is not because a bad placement makes us happy, but because we know that God uses our bad placement to reach the people He has placed us around. This also begins transforming our perspective. How? Because if the good news has thoroughly penetrated our hearts, we will no longer seek after the approval of other people or the comfort of better situations. We will simply rest in what Jesus Christ has done for us!

QUOTES TO CONSIDER:

“It is astonishing that sometimes we believe that we believe when really, in our heart, we do not believe.” - **C.S. Lewis**

“My service for God was fervent, but my passions for Him were cold. The more closely my feet followed Him, the more my heart ran away.” – **J.D. Greear**

The Puritan Jonathan Edwards likened his reawakening to the gospel to a man who had known, in his head, that honey was sweet, but for the first time had that sweetness burst alive in his mouth.

“What people need to know is not only what the Gospel is, but what the Gospel does.” - **Jonathan Dodson**

“I want you to see the gospel not only as the means by which you get into heaven, but as the driving force behind every single moment of your life.” - **J.D. Greear**

VERSES FOR REFLECTION:

Philippians 1:27: "Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven..."

Philippians 3:20: "But we are citizens of heaven..."

Philippians 1:12: "And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. For review, can someone describe for us what a citizen of heaven is and what that looks like?
2. Can you describe the difference between just having a “head knowledge” of the Gospel, with also having a “heart knowledge” that filters down into the heart?
3. How does bad news and awful circumstances end up tainting our perspectives? Why do you think this is the case?
4. Michael said that we often let bad news affect us when the Gospel remains in the head instead of getting deeply down into our hearts. Can you describe how your life would look, if your heart was fully affected by the Gospel? How might it change the way you respond to circumstances, people, or other things?
5. When the Gospel is deeply embedded in our hearts, one of the ways it begins transforming us, is by transforming our placement. With that, do you like where God has currently placed you? Why or why not? AND, in what ways could God begin using you to bring transformation to that place?
6. Another way the heart-felt Gospel affects us, is by transforming our perspective. How has this begun happening in your life?

POSSIBLE PRAYER TOPICS:

- Asking God to transform our hearts
- Acknowledging that we cannot change our hearts. That we cannot force ourselves to love Him more.
- Asking the Holy Spirit to awaken us and to transform us!
- Prayers that God would use us, even though we are weak, to bring His love to others who have been placed around us.
- Praying that God would give us a new perspective

CITIZENS

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