



TIC Connect Group Discussion Guide

25-31 August 2019 | Philippians 3:17-4:1

The Message. As a citizen of heaven, live on this earth with a heavenly perspective.

Context. After a brief introduction and a section devoted to Paul’s thanksgiving and prayer for the church (1:1-11), the apostle begins ... emphasizing humility and unity in the face of opposition from without and division from within (1:12-2:18). Then, in 3:1-4:1, ... [b]ecause certain Judaizers had been in contact with the church, the apostle focuses on true righteousness in contrast to false, law-based righteousness. In 3:1-16 he uses his own life as a model of what true righteousness is and how it is achieved. In 3:17-4:1 he applies this message to the Philippian church. (Bible.org).

Observation & Meaning

1. In 3:12, Paul says that he is not perfect. In 3:17, he asks people to imitate him and those who follow his example. What is Paul trying to show us here?
2. What kind of person does Paul describe as enemies of the cross in 3:18-19?

Their end is destruction	
Their god is their belly	
They glory in their shame	
Their minds set on earthly things	

3. How does Paul treat or respond to the people he describes above (3:18)?
4. How does Paul contrast the enemies of the cross with the citizens of heaven?

Enemies of the cross	Citizens of heavens
Their end is destruction	(3:20b).
Their god is their belly	(3:21b).

They glory in their shame	(3:21a).
Their minds set on earthly things	(3:20a).

5. What does it mean to live as a citizen of heaven (3:20)?
6. What does it mean to live as a sojourner in this world (cf. 1 Pet. 2:11-12)?
7. What instruction does Paul give in 4:1 and why does he give it?

Application

8. ECF. What are the things of this world that we still hold dear?
9. In what ways can we fail to live as a citizen of heaven while we are on earth?
10. Christ-Centeredness. What hope does Jesus' resurrection give us (3:21)?
11. How does it enable us to live as a citizen of heaven while we are on earth?

Insight

Citizen of Heaven (3:20). We need to appreciate all this would mean to the Philippians, who greatly valued their Roman citizenship. Just as the Philippians could consider themselves citizens of Rome and were under Roman laws and customs (even though they were in fact far from Rome) so Christians should consider themselves citizens of heaven. (Guzik).

Savior (3:20). Savior was a title given to the Caesars. In 48 b.c. Julius Caesar was declared to be "the universal savior of mankind." It then became a common title for the ruling Caesar. Paul means something when he applies the title to Jesus in the context of citizenship. (Guzik).

Resources

Guzik, David. *Philippians*. Enduring Word Commentary. Enduring Word Media, 2012.

Herrick, Greg. "... The Judaizers and Paul (Philippians 3:1-8)." Bible.org. <https://bible.org/seriespage/true-righteousness-part-i---study-contrasts-judaizers-and-paul-philippians-31-8> (accessed on Aug 13, 2019).

"Philippians 3:17-4:1." Cru. <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/bible-studies/philippians-life-worthy-of-gospel/6-leader.html> (accessed on Aug 21, 2019).