

Who Am I...A Citizen of Heaven!

Philippians 3:12-21

November 4, 2018

All Saints Day

One of the questions I like to ask folks that I meet is this, "Where are you from originally?"

You see, I am a Florida native! I am originally from Winter Haven, Florida. I was born and raised there.

Are there any other fellow Florida natives in the group today? Don't tell me you've been in Florida for many years so you consider yourself to be a native! Nope...you are a transplant. If you live here a few months out of the year and then head back North, you are a migratory snow bird and not a year round Florida native species!

I remember a Florida before this guy came and started building his own kingdom. He destroyed a lot of our natural land and resources. Orange groves, cow pastures, swamps, were all wiped out, especially around Central Florida, because of this guy who wanted to build his kingdom in Central Florida.

Florida, before Mr. Mickey Mouse, was so nice and relaxed. It was nothing to travel I-4...really! As a Florida native I miss the pre-Mickey landscape and lifestyle! Will I ever get to live in a pre-Mickey Florida again? Will I-4 ever be a nice drive again?

Where are you from originally? Who are you? Native or transplant or snow bird?

Today that is the question we are asking ourselves? Who Am I? Where am I from originally and where am I heading?

It seems to me that the Florida life I knew growing up as a boy in Central Florida has died and will never be the same. That life has gone away. That life has been turned over to a mouse and his sprawling kingdoms!

It is a new landscape. A new lifestyle! I am still a native Floridian, but now I am a minority and not a majority. The life I knew is no more. Who Am I now? Is there hope for a new life?

I want us to listen to a man who was wondering if there was any hope left in life for him after the landscape of life he was use to was taken away. This guy was bold enough to take his concern to God. His name was Job!

For those who don't know Job let me share with you that God allowed Satan to test Job. His family, fortune and his own health were taken from him. Then he had these friends who tried to tell him he must have done something wrong for such terrible things to happen to him. We pick up Job's prayer to God...the theme of his prayer is the question, **"If we die, will we live again?"**

Job talked about how when a tree is chopped down there is still hope for sprouts to grow out of the stump as long as it remains connected to some water. (Job 14:7-9)
But when it comes to men and women...when they die do they stay dead? Is there any hope?

Now listen to this statement or question of "Who am I" that Job posed to God:

"So mortals lie down and never get up, never wake up again---never. Why don't you just bury me alive, get me out of the way until your anger cools? But don't leave me there! Set a date when you'll see me again.

If we humans die, will we live again? That's my question. All through these difficult days I keep hoping waning for the final change---resurrection! Homesick with longing for the creature you made, you'll call---and I'll answer. (Job 14:12-15MSG)

Who is Job? A citizen of pain and suffering? Or is he a citizen of hope?

Even though Job is suffering and being terribly misunderstood by his friends, his relationship with God remains solid. Over the years of his faithful life he has learned that God is reliable. He continues to pray and lay his case out before God as to why all this is happening to him. He questioned God as to what is the ultimate landscape of life about. If he dies where will he end up? Where will he be a citizen for eternity?

Job is obviously struggling with death and what happens afterwards. Is there any hope when life is cut off? Is there hope for us like a tree stump that new life will sprout? In this struggle Job realized that all he believed and trusted about God is being tested.

In the midst of this test comes that far-sighted glimpse of future hope, future citizenship. ***"If we die will we live again? If so where?"***

Job responded with that proclamation of his future citizenship, that proclamation of hope, that proclamation of the final change in his life...resurrection!

How many of us come from the same place in life where Job took us? How many of us know about how life is brief and full of struggles? Sickness, loneliness, disappointment in friends, and death caused Job to say that life is not fair.

However, in recognizing that is where he was from he goes on to proclaim, with hope, where his new life, his citizenship, will ultimately be found...resurrection!

Job understood that no matter where he may have been born and raised, what his life was originally like, his future hope was in God and the resurrection life. He hoped that his citizenship would be with God forever...a resurrection resident...a citizen of heaven!

No matter how unfair this life on earth may seem to us, this is not all there is to life for us. We have a hope...a resurrection resident hope... a citizenship of heaven.

No matter how unfair your life may seem to you, there is someone who has come to establish his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. He is calling us to be a citizen of that kingdom!

The Apostle Paul identified that citizenship for us. We are citizens of heaven...that's who we are who believe and live our lives in our resurrected Savior.

Paul shared what we are to do to gain and maintain that citizenship of heaven.

Stay focused on the goal of Christ Jesus your Savior. vs. 15

Want what God wants for us. vs. 15

Nothing less than a total commitment to Jesus. vs. 16

Keep track of those running the same course you are running. vs. 17

Be aware that many want easy street--they hate Christ's cross because it is a denial of self and what self wants. vs. 18

Realize there is far more to life for us than what we see here and now.

We are citizens of heaven and like Job we look for that final change of hope...resurrection life forever with Jesus.

Do you believe and desire to live out this life here and now?

Do you desire to claim your citizenship is not here but in heaven?

Jesus promised his disciples that he would go ahead and prepare his kingdom, rooms for us. He would be the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:1-6)

Then He assured them that He is the Resurrection and the Life and anyone who lives and believes in him will live. Even when they die, they will live forever. (John 11:17-26) Do you believe this for yourself?

We have this assurance of citizenship. Jesus, through his death and resurrection has won the victory over sin and death. (I Corinthians 15:55-57)

As citizens of heaven we have been given his assurance of victory over whatever this life tries to throw our way.

Our total focus and commitment is with Jesus and his kingdom that is to come on earth as it is in heaven.

We will seek to live life with those who are fellow citizens of heaven.

We will resist the temptation of easy street.

We trust and believe there is a life beyond this life...a life of hope!

We are reminded of that life...that final change...that resurrection love through communion.

We come and reaffirm our citizenship in heaven.

It doesn't matter where you and I are from originally in life.

What matters is where we are now in the living of our lives.

Will we allow someone to come and build their "mickey mouse" kingdom in our lives?

Or will we place our hope in God who will never let us down?

No matter how unfair this life may seem or be; God guarantees that hope of resurrection life...that heavenly citizenship which is ours through Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior!

Who am I? A citizen of heaven!

Who are you? A citizen of heaven!

