

Philippians- citizens of heaven

Read **Philippians 1:27-2:4**

Paul draws on their understanding of citizenship of the Philippi Roman Colony (architecture, administration modelled on Rome- worship of the emperor). The wording- 'Conduct oneself' – has more political overtones than the English translation gives us. He is appealing to the church's sense of civic duty.

"You know the pride and responsibility attached to living in a Roman colony: remember you have a higher allegiance calling you to faithful conduct."

What does our Citizenship entail... what does it mean to be the people of God?

1. **Tenacity**- an attitude of not giving up
 - a. In season or out of season (2 tim 4 v 2) – consistency regardless of circumstance. Just because Paul wasn't with them they could have used this as an excuse to give up.
 - b. In this context later in the letter Paul say's 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'
 - c. Unanimity- one spirit, one soul- not an individualistic exercise. Tenacity in community- we need one another's support to stay the course.

2. Battle Ready

Paul encourages the Philippians to persevere and have no need to fear. He talks of opponent's destruction and believer's salvation; it shows a double sided token of Gods verdict on that final day. In suffering our salvation becomes more real and meaningful as our decision to be a follower of Christ is put to the test. In suffering we also identify with Jesus who suffered for us... just as grace abounded in the suffering Christ, so when believers suffer for him, grace abounds as well.

3. Unified

We're encouraged to be a people of one spirit and one soul. The real obstacle is in shifting attention away from ourselves as we're encouraged to 'regard one another as better than yourselves, look out for the interests of others'. In the context of this instruction two women had fallen out and this acts as a warning as to how broken relationships can impact a whole church.

The church in Philippi was a diverse church like the Crown. The more diverse we become, the more differences of culture will exist. It's important that we work hard to recognise that our differences are a blessing for the church and don't divide. There will be challenges for us as we grow too. As the Church grows we will continually need to make room and space for new people to come through the doors. We may need to lay down our own preferences for the interests of others.

Some questions...

- a. Which nation in the world are you most loyal to and why?
- b. What has God helped you be tenacious at? What have you consistently given yourself to over many months or years?
- c. In what ways have you suffered for the gospel of Jesus?
- d. How has God helped you through tough situations?
- e. In what ways can you build unity as a cell? And what could pull you apart?
- f. How do you feel about multiplying your cell to make space for others?