

Where is Your Citizenship?

By: Daniel Orona

I've heard my entire life that our citizenship is in heaven and not of this earth. I completely agree with this as Paul says in Philippians 3:17-21, "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame - **who set their mind on earthly things**. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." However, often times after folks had said that our citizenship is in heaven, I've seen them go on and complain about the political aspects of America.

Paul is clear here in verse 19 when he says, "whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly and whose glory is their shame - who set their mind on earthly things." If our citizenship truly is in heaven, then we should not set our minds upon the things of this earth. This includes being politically active and motivated. Look the government is going to do what they feel is correct in their own mind. We must see that their carnal thinking is representative of who voted for them and those interests and not the interest of God. Again, Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-4, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warranty entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Seeing then that we are not to entangle ourselves with the cares of this world, why then to Christians consistently inject themselves into the political atmosphere of a specific country, particularly America?

The answer is because we have not died to self and still think that the freedom of America justifies us to enter the political discourse. This entangles us in the cares of this world, which is exactly what Paul did not want us to do. When Christ walked this earth, he never addressed the Roman government. Paul dealt with all types of evil governments in his journeys and missions. Regardless of the government that is in power, our faith should not waiver nor should our worship. We should pray for whoever is in leadership as Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:1-3, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercession and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior." This is regardless of if you agree with the leadership and direction or not.

We should also respect the authority that has been placed over us as well. Paul said in Romans 13:1-3, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:" This goes back to authority. We are to subject ourselves to the authority that is over us. Now, I would also say, if that authority goes against what the Lord is telling you to do then you have a choice to make. Peter told the Sanhedrin that it was better for him to follow God than man. That should be our attitude, but only when led but the Spirit. But if we think that we are going to have any chance of moving the needle in society through political means, we are sorely mistaken. The heart of society rests in the nature of its individuals. It didn't matter that the law said, "Thou shalt not kill." The Israelites still offered their children as sacrifices to Molech. Only a change in the heart can actually change society regardless of the laws that are passed.

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So, what this boils down to is that we must recognize that we are not to entangle ourselves with this world, subject ourselves to the authority over us according to the will of God and make sure that we are focused on where our citizenship lies. Paul said in Colossians 3:1-4, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in god. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Put your focus on the work that God has given you to complete. Jesus told us in Matthew 24:45-46, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing."

It's for these reasons that I truly believe a Christian should not hold public office. If our citizenship is not of this earth, how can we effectively represent the interest of the constituents that have voted us in and follow the leading of the Spirit and the will of God? We can't. Christ said in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." We forget this. We must follow Christ and what He wants of us over and above everything else.

We must decide where our citizenship is. Is it in heaven with Christ or is it on this earth? If we are American citizens, then we limit the power of God and begin to entangle ourselves in the cares of this country and the needs of the secular society. If we are citizens of heaven, then we work and focus on the things that God wants and has for us. The choice is simple, but one that we must fully commit to. Remember what Christ said in Revelation 3:15-16, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth." Our God is a jealous God, and we can't straddle the fence. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways as James said in James 1:8. The choice is one that each of us must make.