

3. What matters

Philippians 1:27-30

Introduction

When you become an Australian citizen, you must make a citizen pledge in which you commit yourself to the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. The Australian citizenship pledge states:

From this time forward, under God I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic belief I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

What part of this pledge would you say is most important? If you had to shorten it and could only chose one important main idea which one would it be?

In the passage that we are studying today Paul exhorts the believers to live in a manner worthy of the gospel as a citizen [of heaven]. Paul uses a Greek word, *politeuomia*, in verse 27 that literally referred to the conduct of a citizen. Later in the letter he will explain to the Philippians that our citizenship is in heaven (3:20). Please read verses 27 to 30 where Paul begins to explain what this citizenship means for the Philippians.

What matters

1. What is the one overarching principle that is to govern how citizens of heaven behave and what do you think this will change about the way you do things at work or at home?
2. What was Paul hoping to either hear of or see going on in the lives of the community of believers in Philippi?

What's involved

3. What do you think it means to stand firm in this way (see other passages like 2 Cor. 1:24; Gal 5:1; Eph. 6:13-14; Col 4:12; 2 Thess. 2:15)?
4. What were the Philippians to be striving together for and what would be involved in this (see Phil. 1:5,12,25,4:3)?
5. Who are the people that you are standing close together with or that you could be making your stand with and working alongside?

The opposition

6. Who weren't the Philippians to be afraid of and why might they have been tempted to be intimidated by them (1:30; see also Acts 16:16-24)?

7. What assurance does Paul give to people who are suffering at the hands of those who oppose them?

8. What does Paul tell the Philippians about how they should think about such suffering?

9. Do you think all those who are seeking to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ will experience some form of suffering or hardship?

Your citizenship pledge

10. Try writing your own pledge in your own word or work on one with another member of the group. In your pledge please outline what it will mean for you to live here as a citizen of heaven.

From this time forward, under God I pledge....