

## SOJOURNING TOGETHER

### I. 1 Peter 2:9-12 & Philippians 3:20-21 & 4:1

**A. 1 Peter 2:9-12 (NIV) reminds us who we are and where we're going: 9** *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. 10* *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11* *Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, (sojourners) to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12* *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us. (Hear WE over me in all this!)*

**B. Philippians 3:20-21 & 4:1 (NIV) echoes loud and clear: 20** *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21* *who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. 4:1* *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!*

**C. We've spent the past couple weeks in South Carolina. There's a lot of Clemson Tiger and SC Gamecock fans in that neck of the cornfield. So when I walk the beach wearing a Buckeye hat or tee, the expressions are interesting. Sometimes it's a grin. Occasionally a glare. But the really fun part is when someone yells out, "O.H!" and I yell back, "I.O!" Or sometimes it's just, "Go Bucks!" When that happens, you know you're not alone. Kindred spirits are all about you. But what's better? Meeting fellow believers!**

**D. In the time of the early church, Christians had fierce opposition. Believers were hated by Jews and Pagans alike. Persecution was common. If arrested and you didn't swear allegiance to Caesar, execution was likely. Among Romans, the slower and more painful way you could be tortured to death, the better. Whether that be throwing Christians to the lions, making them face gladiators, or in Nero's case, nailing them to crosses and lighting them on fire; thus the term, "Roman Candles." Having brothers & sisters in Christ you could trust meant everything.**

**E. The clever invention of the fish sign enabled believers to identify with one another as one person might draw a half arc in the dirt and then another, recognizing the gesture, would add the second arc, forming a fish, Ichthus. *Ichthus, (Iota, Chi, Theta, Upsilon, Sigma)* was an acronym for *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior*. But it wasn't like Christians had fish signs branded on their camels and donkeys. *(Bray if you love Jesus!)* It was a risky symbol, one of life and death magnitude, but that's how vital it was to find genuine, trustworthy, fellow believers in Christ.**

**F. Our Lord so values our love and fellowship among one another that He'll sovereignly work in many different ways to bring it about. Sometimes it's a move of the Holy Spirit such as a time of revival. Sometimes it comes when persecution intensifies, making true believers more scarce because the posers quit posing and simply disappear. Revival & upheaval both work. God has His ways of sifting, refining, and uniting His own.**

**G. If many so-called Christians were totally honest, they'd have to admit they like the culture this world has to offer better than that of God's Kingdom. There's lots of shiny things out there, glittery objects to entice you. Satan custom-crafts his lures and he's out to hook as many as he can. Maybe you're attracted to notoriety, popularity, or being "woke" as the term's been coined. Maybe you're drawn to an extra-biblical morality that at it's core is immoral in the eyes of God. Maybe it's big toys and lots of stuff. Maybe it's the thrill of climbing a corporate ladder or having some dazzling career in the realm of sports or entertainment. Ever heard a big star lauded like this: '*He or She started out singing in church but now they fill stadiums!*' Except now they're belting out tunes that glorify everything but God. So does that represent a promotion in God's eyes?**

**H. This isn't something new. When Paul was in the Mamertine Prison in Rome, many of his friends had scattered. In 2 Timothy 4:9-10a Paul writes: "*Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.*" Thessalonica apparently had lots of shiny things. But like Paul and Peter, we're headed for a different destination--it's a place called **Home!****

**I. W. Hershel Ford tells the story about Teddy Roosevelt who was coming home from a big game hunt in Africa:** When Theodore Roosevelt boarded a ship at an African port they rolled out the red carpet. The crowds gathered on the dock and applauded him. On board the ship he was given the finest suite. Throughout the voyage he was the center of attention... Another man boarded the ship at the same time, an old missionary who'd given his life away for Christ in Africa. Now his wife was dead, his children, gone, and he was old and worn out, going back to America. But no one noticed him. No one applauded him. He was just a lonely old man. When the ship docked in San Francisco a great crowd greeted Roosevelt. They applauded him. Bells rang out, whistles blew, and again they rolled out the red carpet with all the pomp and glory. But no one was there to meet the old missionary--no one noticed him. He went to a small hotel to spend the night. That evening the old missionary bowed down beside his bed, broken and alone, asking God why there was no one to greet him or welcome him home. And it was no more out of his mouth when it was like God spoke directly into his heart: "*Missionary, you are not home yet.*" **(Hey folks, we aren't Home yet either!)**

**J. 1 Peter 2:9-12 points us towards Home:** "*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, **(sojourners)** to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.*

**K. And here's an encore of Philippians 3:20-21 & 4:1:** "*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!"*

**\* Close with Prayer...**

## **Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff**

### **1 Peter 2:9-12 (NIV)**

**9** But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. **11** Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. **12** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.

### **Philippians 3:20-21 & 4:1 (NIV)**

**20** But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. **4:1** Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

## **Bonus Rations for Further Nourishment**

**Ichthus - Jesus Christ, God's Son, The Saviour - Derek Thomas**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odChIApiAK0>

**Roosevelt and the Lonely Missionary - W. Hershel Ford**  
<https://fightoffaithblog.com/2020/12/08/roosevelt-and-the-lonely-missionary/>

**What Does it Mean that Our Citizenship is in Heaven? - GotQuestions.org**  
<https://www.gotquestions.org/citizenship-in-heaven.html>

**Thou Shalt Not Slander - Greg Morse**  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/thou-shalt-not-slander>

**Your Weird Church is “Plan A” and There is No “Plan B” - Jared Wilson**  
<https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/your-weird-church-is-plan-a-and-there-is-no-plan-b/>

**In a World of Narratives, Be Radically Committed to Reality - Brett McCracken**  
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/narratives-reality/>

### **Proverbs 3:3 (ESV)**

**3** Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

### **Proverbs 18:24 (ESV)**

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

### **Ruth 1:16-17 (ESV)**

**16** But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. **17** Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”

### **Matthew 6:24 (ESV)**

**24** No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

### **Matthew 7:12 (ESV)**

**12** So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

### **John 10:10 (ESV)**

**10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

### **John 15:13 (ESV)**

**13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

### **John 17:13-19 (ESV)**

**13** But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. **14** I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15** I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. **18** As You sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19** And for their sake I consecrate Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

### **Romans 12:2 (ESV)**

**2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

### **Galatians 2:20 (ESV)**

**20** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

### **Colossians 1:9-14 (ESV)**

**9** And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

**10** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. **13** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

### **Revelation 2:10 (ESV)**

**10** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

### **Tacitus on Nero's Persecution**

"Then, Nero, in order to avert this report from himself, caused those called Christians by the common people, to be accused and exceedingly tormented. The author of this name is Christ, who was publicly put to death under the reign of Tiberius, by Pontius Pilate, the governor. Those who confessed that they were Christians, were first apprehended, and afterwards by making it known themselves a great multitude were all condemned, not so much on account of the conflagration, as of the hatred in which they were held by mankind. The taking of their lives was accompanied with much mockery; they were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and then torn to pieces by dogs; or nailed on crosses; or placed at stakes and burned; serving also as torches for the spectators, when the day was over."

- Tacitus (A.D. 56-120) according to the annotation of John Gysius in Hist. Mart. fol. 6. col. 2.

### **Quote by Jonathan Edwards**

"To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here."

### **Quote by Vance Havner**

"If you are a Christian, you are not a citizen of this world trying to get to heaven; you are a citizen of heaven making your way through this world. "

### **Quote by John MacArthur**

"Because the church doesn't really have heaven on its mind, it tends to be self-indulgent, self-centered, weak, and materialistic. Our present comforts consume too much of our thoughts, and if we're not careful, we inevitably end up inventing wrong fantasies about heaven - or thinking very little of heaven at all."

### **Quote by J.C. Ryle**

"Let us remember, there is One who daily records all we do for Him, and sees more beauty in His servants' work than His servants do themselves... And then shall His faithful witnesses discover, to their wonder and surprise, that there never was a word spoken on their Master's behalf, which does not receive a reward."

**Quote by Thomas à Kempis**

"Wait for the Lord. Behave yourself manfully, and be of good courage. Do not be faithless, but stay in your place and do not turn back."

**Quote by William Still**

"It is impossible to be faithful to Jesus Christ and not incur the opposition of the world."

**Quote by William Gurnall**

"God requires no more than faithfulness in our place."

**Quote by J.I. Packer**

"Faithfulness is our business; fruitfulness is an issue that we must be content to leave with God."

**Quote by Iain H. Murray**

"There is no guarantee that men faithful to God will be recognizable by their numbers, their talents or their success."

**Quote by Charles Spurgeon**

"I know of nothing which I would choose to have as the subject of my ambition for life than to be kept faithful to my God till death."

**Quote by Leonard Ravenhill**

"I have no faith in my faith. My faith is in the faithful God."