

# Being Disciples: Practicing the Way of Jesus

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

## Practicing the Way of Jesus Together For Brooklyn

Dear RPS family,

Given the complexity of our time it is easy to think that the world Christians must navigate is utterly unique. And while there are new challenges and complexities in the late modern age in general and certainly in 2020 specifically, Christians throughout the centuries have had to navigate the complex political and social realities in which they live.

From the church in Acts living under persecution, living on the margins without power to St. Augustine witnessing and ministering during the fall of the Roman empire several centuries later, Christians have relied on the hope and promise that our primary calling is to live as citizens of heaven. Paul says in Philippians 3:20: But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Paul's words are not a call to retreat from the world but rather a call to live and serve within the realities of this world all the while living as ambassadors (citizens) of God's kingdom, which is not only a future hope but a present reality.

In this study I encourage you to consider how we as a church ought to be taking up this call to live as citizens of heaven. How does the fact that our primary allegiance to Jesus sustain us in all the aspects of our lives? What does it mean to "imitate Paul" and "walk like him" according to v. 17? And lastly, how does Paul's love and joy for the Philippians give us an example of how we are to love, which is perhaps our greatest political act.

In Christ,  
Chris

### LOOKING AHEAD:

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11.15 | Philippians 4:2-9  
The Way of Leadership

11.22 | Philippians 4:10-23  
The Way of Stewardship

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*On Christians in the 1st century:*  
*“They dwell in Greek cities, they eat like everyone else, they dress like everyone else, and yet their citizenship confessedly contradicts expectation. They marry and have babies, but they keep instead of discard the unwanted children. They share meals but not wives. They obey the laws and yet they surpass them in their goodness. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as foreigners.”*

*Epistle of Diognetus*

# The Way of Citizenship

Study for the Week of 11.8 | Philippians 3:12-4:1

Look to the Scriptures

- Open in prayer ask God to for wisdom to discern, for eyes to see and ears to hear.

Look to the Text

- What is happening in this passage? What phrases jump out at you?
- Faith - Consider Paul's call to live as "citizens of heaven" in v. 20. What are some of the competing citizenships or allegiances we are tempted to follow before being a citizen of heaven? What are some ways that, by faith, you have lived as citizens of heaven the past few weeks?
- Love - Consider Phil. 4:1. Paul calls the church in Philippians his joy and crown and his beloved. What does this say about the nature of the church family and how might we model this love and affection towards one another?
- Hope - Philippians teaches us how to hope in Christ. In v. 21, Paul links our resurrection hope to our citizenship in heaven. How does the resurrection allow us to live as citizens of heaven? Consider v. 12-16 as well.

Listen to one another

- Consider sharing places where you are facing hardship in this season of your life.
- Or pray a version of the Examen such as sharing the following:
  - Consolation: A time in the past week where you felt close to God.
  - Desolation: A time in the past week where you felt far from God.
  - Looking ahead: What are you looking forward to or most worried about in the coming week

Pray

- Spend time praying for one another and our world incorporating both what you have studied and prayer requests in your time of prayer.

Practice

- Paul encourages the Philippians in Phil 4:9 to “practice these things”, so take this time over the next few weeks on 1 or 2 spiritual practices that you would like to work on. It could be something you are currently doing or a new practice you want to take up. You can do this as a group together or as individuals, but consider how you can practice the way of Jesus together during this time. Some suggestions: Daily Scripture reading, keeping Sabbath, fixed-hour prayer, memorize Philippians 2:5-11 together, etc. Talk about how what you have discussed in your group might help your daily/weekly practices.

How are your spiritual practices helping you to have the mind of Christ? How do they lead you out thinking first about yourself and instead thinking and serving others?