

Dual Citizenship

Lesson Text: **Philippians 3:20-21**

INTRODUCTION:

- A. **Philippians 3:20-21** – “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.”
- B. Probably all of us found it difficult to pull away from our television sets as we approached the war with Iraq.
- C. The events that took place on 9/11/01 and the events that have followed since have been hard for many to process.
- D. So many have been left with so many questions and so many conflicting emotions.
1. Discussed in the local barber shops and beauty salons.
 2. Discussed and debated in every work place.
 3. Discussed in every school, college, university, and graduate school.
 4. Discussed in every home of every community of every state.
 5. Discussed in every religious place of assembly.
 6. Discussed in every informed nation around the world.
 7. Discussed among children.
- E. A recent family magazine poll found that the scariest thing children watched on television was 9/11 and the burning and then the collapsing of twin towers of the world Trade Center in New York City . . .
1. Children saw.
 - a. America under attack
 - b. Their homeland being attacked.
 - c. Their security being attacked.
 - d. Mean people doing mean things.
 - e. They saw fear and disbelief in the faces of their parents and caregivers.
 - f. They heard expressions of horror and disbelief come from people who were their security providers . . . security blankets, if you please.
 - g. They knew it was serious . . . and they learned from adults, whether intended or not, that they should be afraid, too.
- D. With all of this acknowledged and understood, and as the war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in a broader sense, the war on terror continues, we raise a pertinent question today . . . “How should we, as children of God, feel, think, and act during times like these?”
1. We have a dual citizenship . . . citizenship in the United States of America, and citizenship in the kingdom of God,

2. Five thoughts will be put before us.

FIRST . . . INJUSTICE SHOULD ANGER US.

A. Consider the "Imprecatory Psalms."

1. Imprecatory means to "invoke evil, to curse."

2. Examples of imprecatory Psalms

a. **Psalm 69:22-28**

Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap.

Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.

Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.

Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents.

For they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded.

Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness.

Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.

b. **Psalm 5:10**

Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, For they have rebelled against You.

c. **Psalm 59:1-4**

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; Defend me from those who rise up against me.

Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And save me from bloodthirsty men.

For look, they lie in wait for my life; The mighty gather against me, Not for my transgression nor for my sin, O LORD.

They run and prepare themselves through no fault of mine. Awake to help me, and behold!

d. **Psalm 79:1-6**

O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; Your holy temple they have defiled; They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.

The dead bodies of Your servants They have given as food for the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth.

Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem, And there was no one to bury them.

We have become a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and derision to those who are around us.

How long, LORD? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire?

Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You, And on the kingdoms that do not call on Your name.

e. Psalm 109 is still another example.

3. These Psalms were not written due to the desire for personal revenge, but because of the unrighteousness of David's enemies, and their sins against God.

B. Consider the persecution of early Christians by the Roman Empire and read the words of those who had been martyred. **Revelation 6:9-10** – "When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

C. Lest we merely come to see this as a personal and national offense, we need foremost to remember what an offense this is to God.

D. The wickedness of mankind . . . the unrighteousness and depravity of man . . . is what should anger us the most. The deliberate and premeditated destruction of innocent human lives does anger us, does it not?

E. What took place on 9/11 was not just an attack against our nation . . .

1. It was an attack against all that was holy and right.

2. It was an attack against the very freedom God has blessed us with.

3. It was a cowardly attack by the puppets of the evil one himself.

F. And for that reason, we should be angry and desire justice.

SECOND . . . GOVERNMENT HAS A DIVINE RIGHT TO PUNISH EVIL-DOERS.

A. **Romans 13:1-7**

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.

Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

B. While it is not our place as individuals to wage a "personal war" against evil doers, God has ordained government to deal with evil-doers.

THIRD . . . WE MUST GUARD AGAINST HATRED AND PREJUDICE.

A. We must distinguish between one's person and one's deeds.

B. We must hate the sin. **Psalm 119:104** - Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

C. We must love the sinner. **Matthew 5:43-44** - "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. "

D. We must also avoid broad sweeping condemnations and generalizations.

1. Jesus suffered from this. **John 1:46** - And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

2. Statements such as "All such-and-such are . . ." are almost always unfair and prejudicial.

3. Please permit me a personal illustration of this:

a. Against all Arabs. Since 1971 my work among Arab people in Israel.

b. Against all Moslems. Amoudi and others . . . dear friends. Friendships and many kindnesses shown through the years.

FOURTH . . . WE MUST NOT BLAME GOD.

A. The fact that God allows bad things to happen does not mean He endorses those bad things, nor should we think God would be "better" or "more holy" if He would not allow bad things to happen.

B. Freedom, which we all value, includes the right to choose, both good and evil.

C. If one needs to be blamed, it is the Devil for the influence and control he has gained in the hearts and lives of men. **2 Timothy 3:13** - But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

FIFTH . . . WE REALLY NEED TO PRAY.

A. **1 Timothy 2:1-3**

I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

B. **James 5:16**

“. . . The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

C. We don't know the good that may come from God's people making intercession for our nation . . . keep it up!

CONCLUSION:

A. Without question, the events of 9/11 and following, are disturbing.

B. When one thinks about the various scenarios that could possible materialize, it can be rather frightening. Therefore let us remember:

1. Injustice should anger us.
2. Government has a Divine right to punish evil-doers.
3. We must guard against hatred and prejudice.
4. We must not blame God.
5. We really need to pray.

C. In it all . . .and through it all, may we make three simple recommendations:

1. Have the faith of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk 3:16-18

Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops.

Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls --

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

2. Be obedient to God in all things that are in accordance to His will.
3. While living faithful to God, be helpful to others.

D. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation.**