

# “Illegal Citizens”

## Philippians 3:17-21

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### INTRODUCTION:

- A. This not intended to be a political speech, but rather a sermon introduced by a political “hot potato.”
1. A political “hot potato” from which some valuable Biblical lessons can be derived.
  2. That political “hot potato” is the ever-growing problem of illegal immigration.
  3. Please be patient while the lesson is being introduced.
- B. One of the major controversies in our country it the great debate about what to do about the increasing numbers of people who are in this country illegally.
- C. The issue is complex . . . divisive . . . And heated.
1. Some people take sides based on long-held prejudices.
  2. Some people take sides based on an increased burden in the delivery of public services.
  3. Some people take sides based on dollars and cents . . . Economics
  4. Some people take sides based on compassion.
  5. How blessed we are to live in such a country that our standard way of life is desired by so many who will risk much, even their lives, in order to attain in.
- D. How many illegal aliens are there in the United States today? No one can say for sure, but . . .
1. New data from the 2000 Census and other sources suggest the government has long underestimated the number of illegal aliens living in the United States.
  2. The Immigration and Naturalization Service had figured the number of illegal aliens to be 6 million.
  3. One report said that the number of illegal aliens has grown to as many as 12 million . . . Accounting for about one in every 20 workers.
  4. Scholars at Boston’s Northeastern University are now suggesting that the actual number might run as high as 13 million.
  5. A report estimates that some 850,000 illegal aliens have entered the United States each year since the year 2,000.
  6. One thing for sure . . . The number increases every day. The news media keeps us reminded of that.
- E. Our politicians seem to be totally perplexed by the situation.
1. Some want to give all the illegal aliens amnesty and wipe the slate clean and be done with it.
  2. Some want to make them full citizens.
  3. Others want to round them up and deport them to their own country.

4. Others want to build walls and implement additional safeguards in order to keep illegal aliens out of our country.
  5. Apparently no one solution will make everyone on both sides of this issue happy.
- F. We do have laws that tell how one can become an American citizen . . . But some chose not to obey the rules.
1. Thus, they remain illegal.
  2. They may be able to enjoy many of the benefits of being a citizen . . . But they are still illegal.
  3. While our country is so highly criticized and openly opposed by so many people in the world, given half-a-chance, they would come here to live in a heartbeat.
- G. The whole situation reminds me of those who want to go to Heaven, but don't want to follow the rules God has given for heavenly citizenship . . . And therein lays our study.
1. Many prefer to make up their own rules for heavenly citizenship . . . Thus they can enjoy the benefits without all the fuss or bother.
  2. The scribes and Pharisees were like that, and Jesus called them serpents, blind guides, and murderers in Matthew 23:13-35.
- H. Maybe some principles from this current social issue can enhance our understanding of some spiritual principles as well. Thus, I have used this introduction in order to make application to the Kingdom of God . . . The Church.

## **HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP IS AVAILABLE TO ALL . . . BUT THERE ARE RULES TO BE FOLLOWED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN IT.**

- A. **Philippians 3:17-21** - Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.
- 18 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:
- 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame -- who set their mind on earthly things.
- 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
- 21 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. Humanity is divinely called to this citizenship.
1. God has directed us to the source of through which this citizenship is offered. **Matthew 17:5** – “While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’”

- a. Pilate asked, “What is truth?” **John 18:38**
- b. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” **John 14:6**
2. Jesus Himself has called us to such. **Matthew 11:28-30** – “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.  
29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  
30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
3. The Holy Spirit and the church have called us to such.  
**Revelation 22:17** – “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”

## **THE WORLD SEEKS AN ILLEGAL CITIZENSHIP.**

- A. Example # 1 of changing Jesus’ rules . . . The teaching that repeating the “sinner’s prayer” is all one needs to do to go to Heaven.
  1. Never mind the fact that neither Christ nor His apostles ever told anyone that was what to do to be saved.
  2. Never mind the fact that Jesus said in **Mark 16:16** – “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”
  3. Never mind the fact that Jesus said in **John 12:48** – “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him -- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”
  4. People refuse . . . people reject what Jesus has said, and yet they want full citizenship in His kingdom with all its rights and privileges, without fully obeying him.
    - a. Spiritually speaking, they are not legal citizens of the kingdom, but “illegal citizens.”
    - b. The rules for citizenship are fully open to them, but they refuse to comply.
- B. Example #2 of changing Jesus’ rules . . . The teaching that all of the denominational churches are really Christ’s churches.
  1. Never mind the fact that Jesus promised to build but one church. “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” **Matthew 16:18**
  2. Never mind the fact that Jesus adds the truly saved to His own church. “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” **Acts 2:47**
  3. Never mind the fact that Jesus said, “But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.’” **Matthew 15:13**

4. Wanting all man-made churches to be just as acceptable to God as the church His Son died for, will not make it so.
    - a. They want their churches to just as acceptable as Christ’s church, but without complying with the rules of Christ’s church (It’s organization, worship, teachings, etc..)
    - b. Spiritually speaking, instead, one is left with “Illegal churches in God’s sight.”
- C. Example #3 of changing Christ’s rules . . . The teaching that baptism has nothing whatsoever to do with one being saved.
1. Never mind the fact that even though Jesus had no sins, He was still baptized because it was a part of fulfilling all righteousness.
 

**Matthew 3:13-17** – “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him.

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”
  2. Never mind the fact that Jesus plain taught in **Mark 16:16** – “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”
  3. Never mind the fact that every case example of conversion found in the book of Acts (at least ten in number) were immediately baptized for the remission of their sins.
  4. Never mind the fact that the Bible plainly teaches that only those united with Christ in His death by the act of baptism will be in the likeness of His resurrection. **Romans 6:3-5** – “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?
 

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”
  5. People want their conversions to be acceptable to Christ . . . they want to be in the likeness of His resurrection, without being in the likeness of His death and burial, exhibited by baptism (immersion).
    - a. They want all of the benefits and blessings of being converted without complying with the Lord’s rules for conversion.

b. Spiritually speaking, they have an “illegal conversion.”

### CONCLUSION:

- A. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 that only those who do His Father’s will can enter the kingdom. “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” **Matthew 17:21-23**
- B. Just as there are people in this country illegally, wanting all the rights and privileges of full citizenship . . . Many people are endeavoring to be the Lord’s church illegally. They have not complied with the terms of citizenship for entering the Kingdom of God . . . But nonetheless, they want all the rights, privileges, and blessings as if they had. **Listening friends, it is not going to happen!** The tares may remain among the wheat only so long, and then Heaven will see that the two are separated forever.
1. Physical presence in a country does not automatically make one a citizen of that country.
  2. Physical presence in a church assembly does not automatically make one a citizen of the Kingdom of God.
- C. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**