

1 What is a citizen of heaven?  
2 What does it mean to be worthy of the  
3 gospel?How can we see  
4 those traits in others, and how can we  
5 identify them in ourselves?  
6 Those are good questions to ask. But  
7 first I wanted to startBut a couple of  
8 questions Jay invited us to  
9 ask last week, because I think this is  
10 the start of answering these questions.  
11 The first one was, What is life?And the  
12 second, What is death?He  
13 noted that the answer we give to the  
14 first will determine our answer to the  
15 second. His goal, in part,  
16 was to challenge us to  
17 assess our own priorities. When Paul  
18 asked himself, What is life?he  
19 came to the answer Christ. And so when  
20 asking himself, What is death?  
21 he concluded gain. These answers  
22 illustrated Paul's list of priorities.  
23 Simply put, Christ was at the top.  
24 Stand by.  
25 So I have to tell you, I felt convicted  
26 by this message. And the reason for that  
27 is because when I asked myself what is  
28 life, the first answer that came to my  
29 mind is family. And that's a good answer.  
30 I should be prioritizing my  
31 family. But it's not the answer.  
32 The answer is Christ, as Paul concluded.  
33 And I can kind of prove it  
34 if we put it through the test. If my  
35 answer to what is life is  
36 family,Then what must my answer be  
37 for what is death?Abandonment?  
38 Certainly nothing good.  
39 Christ is the answer. And if we're living  
40 with Jesus as our priority, our family  
41 lives will improve. Christ will show us  
42 how to prioritize and treat our family  
43 in ways that we hadn't imagined before.  
44 So then if the answer is God, if the  
45 correct answer for what our life is  
46 supposed to look like is Jesus Christ,  
47 then what is that going to look like for  
48 us?And that is the question  
49 I want to answer today, or at least  
50 discuss today. What does life in Christ  
51 look like for his people?  
52 And in answering that, hopefully I answer  
53 the others. I'd like to begin with a  
54 quote from Warren Wiersbe that I think  
55 gets to the heart of the matter. He  
56 said, We don't behave in order to go to  
57 heaven, as if we could be  
58 saved by our good works. But we  
59 behave because our names have already  
60 been written in heaven, and our  
61 citizenship is in heaven.  
62 And it's worth remembering that the world  
63 around us knows only the gospel it  
64 sees in our lives. That's  
65 the message Paul is writing about in  
66 our verse for today,  
67 Philippians 1:27 through 2:5.  
68 This is the passage about what it means  
69 to live as citizens of heaven while

70 our feet are still planted firmly on the  
71 broken soil of this earth.  
72 Paul isn't giving us a list of religious  
73 duties to earn our way in. He is  
74 reminding us that because we belong to  
75 Christ, our lives should look like  
76 His, even  
77 especially when it means suffering.  
78 So let's get right into the Scripture,  
79 hear the word of God. Only let your  
80 manner of life be worthy of the gospel,  
81 so that whether I come and see you or am  
82 absent, I may hear of you, that  
83 you are standing firm in one spirit, with  
84 one mind striving side by side for the  
85 faith of the gospel, and not frightened  
86 in anything by your opponents. This is a  
87 clear sign to them of their destruction,  
88 but your salvation, and that from God.  
89 For it has been granted to youThat for  
90 the sake of Christ, you should not only  
91 believe in Him, but also suffer for His  
92 sake, engaged in the same conflict that  
93 you saw I had, and now here that I still  
94 have. So if there is any encouragement  
95 in Christ, any comfort from love, any  
96 participation in the Spirit, any  
97 affection and sympathy, complete my joy  
98 by being of the same mind, having the  
99 same love, being in full accord and of  
100 one mind. Do nothing from selfish  
101 ambition or conceit, but in humility,  
102 count others more significant than  
103 yourselves. Let each of you look not  
104 only to his own interests, but  
105 also to the interests of others. Having  
106 this in mind among yourselves, which is  
107 yours in Christ Jesus. Let's  
108 pray.  
109 Lord, we ask that you open your word to  
110 us today. Let it cut through the  
111 distractions of our daily lives, and speak  
112 directly to our hearts. Let us not merely  
113 be hearers of your word, but doers.  
114 Let the Spirit stir in us a deeper  
115 understanding of our calling to suffer,  
116 to serve, to love for your  
117 glory and not our own. In  
118 Jesus' name, amen.  
119 Let's start by talking about living  
120 worthy of the gospel. I don't know about  
121 you, but that phrase makes me  
122 uncomfortable. Words like  
123 worthy and deserve,  
124 because I know what I deserve, and it's  
125 not grace. But Paul is  
126 calling us to try, to  
127 live worthy of the gospel, and that's a  
128 tall mountain indeed. He says, Only  
129 let your manner of life be worthy of the  
130 gospel of Christ. The phrase Paul  
131 uses here literally means live as  
132 citizens when you translate it directly  
133 from the Greek word holy, which is the  
134 one being used here. And this is no  
135 accident, because  
136 Philippi was a Roman colony, and  
137 they prided themselves on Roman  
138 citizenship. They were one of the few

139 cities in the area at the time that they  
140 got to enjoy the benefits of Roman  
141 citizenship, and there was quite a few of  
142 them. I think they didn't even have to  
143 pay taxes. Uh  
144 But Paul is saying something radical.  
145 Despite the benefits of Roman  
146 citizenship, Your  
147 citizenship isn't Roman. That's not what  
148 you're supposed to be leaning into. Your  
149 citizenship is in heaven,  
150 and that changes everything. Our  
151 loyalty is not to Caesar.  
152 Whoever we decide our Caesar is, that's  
153 not who our ultimate loyalty is,  
154 belongs to. It is to Christ. Our  
155 conduct should reflect the values of the  
156 kingdom of heaven. Our lives should show  
157 the world that heaven's government, what  
158 heaven's government looks like, things  
159 like mercy, justice, humility,  
160 and faithfulness are the hallmarks of  
161 that kind of a kingdom.  
162 10 here. In it, Paul advises  
163 -- boy, I'm going to fight this mic the  
164 whole time. And if Paul  
165 advises that we walk in a manner worthy  
166 of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him,  
167 bearing fruit in every good work and  
168 increasing the knowledge of God. He is  
169 saying we should let our lives preach  
170 before our lips ever speak.  
171 It means we are, as Paul wrote elsewhere,  
172 letters from Christ. Second  
173 Corinthians. Living, breathing  
174 testimonies. And this is especially  
175 important, because as Wiersbe reminds us,  
176 for many people, the only gospel they  
177 will ever read is the one they  
178 see in your life, in my life.  
179 Every time we walk out that door, we are  
180 preaching, like it or not.  
181 Every time we walk out that  
182 door, proclaiming ourselves to be  
183 Christians, people are looking to us,  
184 to our actions, to find out who Christ  
185 is. And that is a big  
186 responsibility. And if it doesn't make  
187 you stop and take a closer look at how  
188 we're behaving, each one of us  
189 individually, I don't know what will.  
190 What if the only thing the world  
191 got to know about Jesus  
192 Christ was the example they saw  
193 in you, in me?  
194 That's the reality for many people. What  
195 the world knows about Christianity is not  
196 what the Bible says. Most of them haven't  
197 read the Bible, but what God's  
198 people do. So what kind of gospel are we  
199 showing the world? One of bitterness and  
200 division, or one of grace and peace?  
201 Are we showing a gospel of hypocrisy, or  
202 one of integrity? To live worthy of the  
203 gospel is not to live perfectly,  
204 but to live faithfully.  
205 According to Paul, we achieve this  
206 by standing firm together,  
207 striving to reach these goals

208 together. He says, We should stand in  
209 one spirit, strive side by side  
210 and not be frightened by anything.  
211 Let's take a look at the language he is  
212 using here. Let's give a little visual  
213 example. Stand firm,  
214 side by side, dress right dress, not  
215 afraid, granted to suffer. Does  
216 that language sound familiar to anyone  
217 else here? Any of my fellow veterans?  
218 Yeah, that's military language,  
219 athletic language, battle  
220 language. Paul is saying  
221 that the Christian life isn't a passive  
222 experience, it's a fight, but it's  
223 a fight we do together.  
224 Unity is not a soft thing, it  
225 is armor. It strengthens,  
226 it protects. And it helps us  
227 endure the battlefield of a broken world.  
228 In verse 28, we're  
229 reminded that fear has no place among the  
230 people of God. Paul says, We are not to  
231 be frightened by anything, by our  
232 opponents. This is a clear sign  
233 to them of their destruction, but of our  
234 salvation and that from God. We will  
235 face opposition. out there,  
236 and even in here. But we do not face it  
237 alone. We face it together  
238 with each other and with God. He  
239 is with us, and we are with each other.  
240 Next Paul says something that might stop  
241 us, many of us, dead in our tracks.  
242 It has been granted to you that for the  
243 sake of Christ, you should not only  
244 believe in Him, but also suffer  
245 for His sake. Suffering is  
246 not an interruption of the Christian  
247 life. It's part of it.  
248 It is not a distancing of the Lord from  
249 ourselves, but a drawing nearer,  
250 especially when it feels like we can't  
251 feel His presence at all. Often those are  
252 the times He is the closest.  
253 Suffering is not a punishment, it is a  
254 gift. It is a grace.  
255 Paul is telling us, Don't get out of the  
256 way of suffering. Get into it  
257 because. Suffering shapes us.  
258 Suffering humbles us.  
259 Suffering makes us like  
260 Jesus. Hebrews 12 says, For the  
261 Lord disciplines the one he loves. For  
262 the moment, all discipline seems painful  
263 rather than pleasant, but later it yields  
264 the peaceful fruit of righteousness to  
265 those who have been trained by it.  
266 Our culture avoids suffering at  
267 all costs. literally  
268 like the plague. But we follow  
269 a Savior who embraced suffering to  
270 the very end, and he did it for  
271 us. Paul is  
272 urging us to do the same.  
273 That's the Christ's model. Paul takes  
274 us a little deeper. If unity is strength,  
275 humility is the glue that holds it all  
276 together. He says, Do nothing from

277 selfish ambition, or conceit, but in  
278 humility count others more significant  
279 than yourselves. Well, that's a foreign  
280 command in this world.  
281 Like the world of Paul's time, ours is  
282 built on ambition and  
283 self-promotion. In Philippi,  
284 Paul, or excuse me, in Philippi, humility  
285 was seen as a weakness.  
286 That was pretty common for the ancient  
287 world, but Paul is redefining it  
288 as strength. The kingdom of God  
289 is built on cruciform love.  
290 The logic of heaven is upside  
291 down. Think about it. The  
292 first are last.  
293 The greatest are servants.  
294 The Son of God washes feet.  
295 Christ-like humility doesn't mean  
296 thinking less of yourself.  
297 It means thinking of yourself  
298 less. It means being so  
299 secure in your identity as a child of  
300 God that you can pour yourself out  
301 in love for others without fear of  
302 losing status or power or  
303 place, title, position.  
304 Because it wasn't about those things  
305 anyway. John 13 captures  
306 it, A new commandment I give to you  
307 Oops. I mean, a new commandment I give to  
308 you, that you love one another just as I  
309 have loved you. You are also to love one  
310 another. By this, all  
311 people will know that you are my  
312 disciples if you have love for  
313 one another. This is what being a citizen  
314 of heaven looks like. This is how we tell  
315 others who are citizens of heaven. And  
316 this is how we tell that within  
317 ourselves. This is how we identify that.  
318 Christlike love is not a soft  
319 kind of love. It's costly.  
320 It's the love of someone who bears  
321 another's burden, shares another's  
322 sorrow, and enters into  
323 another's suffering, as well as their  
324 own. That's what Paul is  
325 calling us to. He is saying, If you've  
326 received Christ's love, live  
327 like it. Reflect it. Give it to  
328 others. Make His  
329 humility your model.  
330 Let His self-empty shape your service.  
331 Continuing to verse five, he says, Have  
332 this mind among yourselves, which is  
333 yours in Christ Jesus. This verse  
334 leads us straight into one of the most  
335 beautiful and profound passages in all of  
336 Scripture, often referred to as the  
337 Christ hymn, and Jay's going to tackle  
338 that next week, but what we can get  
339 and gathered from verse five, is that  
340 Paul is calling us to imitate Christ's  
341 mindset. Not just his actions,  
342 but his attitude, his disposition,  
343 his inner orientation towards humility,  
344 obedience and sacrifice.  
345 Christ, though fully God, did not

346 cling to his divine privileges.  
347 He did not exploit his status, instead  
348 he laid it down, he became one of us.  
349 He humbled himself and obeyed even to the  
350 point of death on a cross.  
351 This kind of downward movement is foreign  
352 to our human instincts. We want to move  
353 up, get more, be recognized.  
354 Jesus moved downward, gave more,  
355 sacrificed. And Paul says,  
356 That's our pattern. To become more like  
357 Christ is to be shaped by the same  
358 mindset. It's to say, I don't need to  
359 win. I need to serve.  
360 I don't need to be first. I  
361 need to be faithful. I don't need to be  
362 seen. I need to love.  
363 We don't just admire Jesus.  
364 We are being formed into his image,  
365 day by day, through the Spirit.  
366 We are being shaped, sometimes  
367 painfully, into reflections  
368 of our Lord. This is  
369 sanctification. This is discipleship.  
370 This is what it means to live like  
371 citizens of heaven. And hear me  
372 clearly, this kind of  
373 transformation does not  
374 happen overnight. It takes a  
375 lifetime. But it begins when we say,  
376 Yes, Lord, shake meat.  
377 So how do we become more like Christ?  
378 First, spend time with him. We become  
379 like the people we spend time with, read  
380 his word, seek him out in prayer.  
381 Practice obedience.  
382 Christ obeyed the Father even unto death.  
383 We are called to obey, even when it's  
384 hard. Embrace suffering.  
385 Jesus did, and he used it to redeem the  
386 world. To become like  
387 Christ is not easy, but it is good,  
388 and it is the only path that leads to  
389 true life. Not one you have to  
390 wait until death to receive, but  
391 one that starts right now.  
392 Being a citizen of heaven means allowing  
393 the gospel to shape our lives. It  
394 means seeing suffering in Christ's name  
395 not as a curse, but as a grace.  
396 Our humility is not optional.  
397 It's essential. Our faith  
398 isn't fragile. It is built on the  
399 rock. 17  
400 reminds us, If we are children, then  
401 heirs, heirs of God, and fellow heirs  
402 with Christ, provided we suffer with him  
403 in order that we may also be glorified  
404 with him. We often want the  
405 glorification without the suffering. But  
406 Paul says they are linked. It's a package  
407 deal. They come together. If you  
408 want resurrection, you've got to pass  
409 through the cross. Jesus said, Pick  
410 up your cross and follow me.  
411 All of us here, every single person in  
412 these seats, have had seasons of pain  
413 that have made us question what God was  
414 doing. Every one of us has lost

415 sleep over family members, whether due to  
416 sickness, addiction, just spiritual  
417 distance. Each of us have been brought  
418 low by disappointment, failure,  
419 and fear. I'm going through that right  
420 now. Past failures in my life  
421 play in my mind as I  
422 move towards stepping toward broader  
423 ministry. They get in there and sometimes  
424 they make me think I can't do it. They  
425 make me afraid. But when I look  
426 back on those hardships, I see  
427 that they brought me closer to Christ,  
428 not abandoned. but invited, not  
429 punished, but refined.  
430 The Lord said, Come close, child. Let  
431 this suffering do its work.  
432 And it does for all of us,  
433 not all at once, but slowly,  
434 deeply, redemptively.  
435 One of my favorite quotes is from Tierre  
436 de Chadon. He  
437 wrote a whole poem about it. He said,  
438 Trust in the slow work of God. Well,  
439 as long as we are keeping ourselves open  
440 to Him, we can be sure He is working  
441 in us. Not in our time,  
442 in His. So here's the conclusion.  
443 Don't get out of the way of suffering.  
444 Get into it, because Christ is in  
445 it. Because your  
446 transformation flows from it.  
447 When the world looks at us, Trying to  
448 figure out what Christ looks like, let  
449 them see unity. Let them see  
450 true humility. Let them see love. And  
451 when it's appropriate, let them see us  
452 suffer. We'll do it with joy.  
453 Let them see a people committed to  
454 serving the Lord and their fellow human  
455 beings. Love the  
456 Lord your God. Love your neighbor.  
457 Love them as Christ loves  
458 you. We are  
459 citizens of heaven. Christ's story  
460 ends in redemption. And because of Him,  
461 so does ours.  
462 So I want to pray together. I don't know  
463 if that's me making all that ragged.  
464 So for our closing prayer today, I want  
465 to do something a little bit different  
466 than what we've done before in my last  
467 residency for school. We prayed like this  
468 several times in one of my classes, and I  
469 found it to be impactful. And I wanted  
470 to share it with you, see if you liked it  
471 as well. Um We'll  
472 start putting our hands over our hearts,  
473 taking a couple of breaths, closing our  
474 eyes, calming ourselves.  
475 Inviting the Holy Spirit in.  
476 Just to talk. Allow his  
477 presence to fill you. And if you feel  
478 compelled, repeat after me.  
479 Lord God. Lord God  
480 God. I want you to make me worthy of  
481 your gospel. I want you to make me  
482 worthy of your gospel. Show me,  
483 Lord, what my next step toward

484 that looks like.  
485 Show me what I can work on to better  
486 glorify you.  
487 Give me the courage to walk closer to  
488 you. Give me the courage to walk  
489 closer to you. Give me the grace  
490 to love. Give me the  
491 grace to love. And the strength to be  
492 humble.  
493 Lord, let the world see you  
494 in me. Lord, let the world  
495 see you in you. In  
496 Jesus' name. In Jesus' name.