

## Week 5: Privileges of being Citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Objective: To walk away with an understanding that the benefits of citizenship are found in both Eternity and also in the present. As well as having some action items in mind to take hold of these benefits.

Focal Passage: John 1:11-13

1. Many kids I have encountered long to grow up. They see the world they live in as limited and lacking. They are subject to the wishes and desires of the parent. They can't drive a car yet, they don't always get to decide what to eat when bedtime is, to do or not to do chores and school. The list goes on and on. This seems interesting because I spend most time on occasion wishing I could be a child again. I don't want to pay bills, decide on dinner, drive places, etc. Can someone else please decide for me while I take a nap?
  - a. Seriously though I think there are times when we want to cast our gaze onto the future. We long to go home to our creator, to be with Him in eternity, and why wouldn't we? But I think we can lose sight at times of what being citizens of the Kingdom means for us today, not just tomorrow.
  - b. Citizenship comes with privileges. What are some privileges of being an American citizen? (allow answers but stay on the surface don't get sucked into a black hole of politics. Answers may include, legal security or being treated fairly, property security, the right to vote, and the right to work and earn a living. Etc)
  - c. Just as our national citizenship processes privileges so too does our Kingdom citizenship. Let's spend some time this morning discussing those privileges both in eternity but also in the now and how to lay hold of them.
2. We are adopted Children
  - a. Possible passages. There are more: John 1: 11-13; Hebrews 2:9-11
  - b. In war what happens to enemy soldiers when they are conquered? There are only two options, right? Death or POW which may also lead to death. In ancient times another option was slavery. Have you ever thought about the fact that we were God's enemies? When we choose to live life our way, when we do what we want we are citizens of the Kingdom of Darkness. Remember the prodigal son? Maybe I can go back as my father's slave but no God in His Kingdom's advance doesn't destroy us, doesn't imprison us, doesn't subject us to slavery, rather the conquer, Jesus Christ is happy to call us brothers and sisters. Que the mind exploding.
  - c. What does being adopted children do for us?
    - i. We are safer than the world could ever make us.
      1. We belong to the king. Kids are way more comfortable when their parents are near. Young children will find reasons to need their parental figure just to make sure they are near.

2. I remember the Lion King movie. Little Simba wandered into the badlands and was confronted by a group of hyenas, and they were going to kill him. Simba was brave until they showed up and then quickly became scared, it looked bad and then His dad showed up and the tables turned. The hyenas began to apologize for not knowing this was the King's cub etc.
  3. Jesus says there is only one to fear. (Luke 12:4-5) and He is our Father.
- ii. We are set to receive an inheritance we did not earn.
    1. I can't get over the immenseness of this one. We have rebelled, we chose our way instead of His way. Ever since the garden, we have always fallen short of its glory. (Romans 3:23)
    2. Even now as we are working through our sanctification on this journey with God and each. We still mess up. We still fail His royal standards yet despite this we are still given a royal inheritance.
    3. Jesus tells us that this inheritance includes a place prepared with God in eternity. (John 14:1-3) Perhaps a little opinion on my part but this idea of place for you connects to the psychological idea of belonging. So many people spend so much of their lives trying to find a sense of belonging and value, but thanks to our inheritance we already belong.
  - iii. We are set for peace. Do not confuse this with ease.
    1. Sometimes we view peace as an emotional release. A deep sigh and a drop of tension from the shoulders as we exhale. And while we experience that emotional relief peace, it is more about the long-term peace that is higher than an emotional response.
    2. It's a response to the cares of the world that bombard us trying to cause us to be alarmed by this or that. It is a response that acknowledges we serve a God who is ultimately in control of everything.
    3. This peace is not just that one day years from now I will make it to heaven. It is a belief in the truth that God is working everything together for your good. (Romans 8:28)
3. With this idea of peace, we are starting to scratch the surface of what is available to citizens of His Kingdom now. This citizenship change is not just a status change, you used an enemy of God now you are a child. It's more than a destination change. You used to be destined to death and hell but now you're destined to life and heaven. It is a lifestyle change, you used to live this way, but now you are going to live that way.
    - a. Matthew 6:25-34
      - i. <sup>25</sup> "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food,

and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? <sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- ii. In the text we are being given another way to live as citizens of the kingdom of God. Have you ever watched the world? Every media is filled with the solutions to all life’s problems. Do this to make more money, and do this to lose weight. Wearing these clothes will make people like you. On and on it goes. (Can let the audience think of some ads they have seen depending on the group) All this feels like the first part of 32 doesn’t it? People clambering for the things they want and need or at least they think to get them where they want to go. It is a never-ending hamster wheel because none of those things fixes us.
- iii. In this text there are two groups. Jesus’ audience, his followers, and v 32 he references the pagans. We as citizens are free from the rat race.
  - 1. we have to work and make wise stewardship choices.
  - 2. As Citizens though we are given access to the thing that we need, God and His righteousness. When we pursue that as a lifestyle the rest falls into place.

b. Matthew 11:28-30

- i. <sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
- ii. I love this passage. The more I grow the more it resonates. In Jesus’ day the yoke was the harness of sorts for the ox that would plow up a field 2 ox would be yoked together. Turns out though that it was a fairly common expression of rabbis to offer their disciples. The yoke of the rabbi was their way of life.

- iii. So how beautiful is it that Jesus stands saying to those of you who are tired of doing life the world's way, those of you who can't catch a break in the world's kingdom, may I offer you the way of God's kingdom. It's free of the bondage of the world, free of the destination of death.
- iv. What's more I'll walk with you and teach you this new lifestyle. To learn from Rabbi Jesus we need to be with Him. In comes the spiritual disciplines. Reading, praying, memorizing, solitude, being with other citizens. Do you notice in the gospels that these are things Jesus did?
- c. Being in Jesus' yoke enables us to experience, peace not just in eternity but now. It enables us to have a taste of the good life that finds fulfillment in eternity. We need to not just be hearers but doers as well. So let's lay hold of the blessings of having Kingdom citizenship.
  - i. Identify one thing you find yourself still chasing as the world does. Start the process of surrendering the concern over to God.
  - ii. Identify one spiritual discipline and commit to practicing it this week.
  - iii. Take a minute each day this week and thank God that He has adopted you into His family.