

CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

Philippians 3:17 to 4:1

Saturday, March 16, 2019

In Philippians 4 Paul encourages us to follow good examples, to emulate the behavior of those who are “citizens of heaven”. I’m reminded of the popular query of recent years, “What Would Jesus Do?”

In a recent Bible study, with my wife Helen beside me, I drew a chorus of chuckles when I commented that at one point in my life I had made a careful decision ***not*** to do what Jesus would do – when I decided to get married! That is something neither Jesus nor Paul would do, but I chose not to follow their examples, and I’m sure many of you agree with my decision.

What I take from this passage is that we should follow Jesus and Paul in their disdain for the glorification of “earthly” treasures. Jesus warned about “mammon”, which probably meant wealth and possessions. Paul warns against the “belly” or the “stomach”. This is not just about pizza, steak, or chocolate. It’s an admonition that our personal enjoyment of good things must not be allowed to interfere with our mission – to help build God’s kingdom and spread the gospel.

During this season we are called upon to emphasize our spiritual life, and our Lenten Discipline frequently includes at least some rejection of mammon and physical pleasure. We do this not because the things from which we abstain are necessarily bad in themselves, but because they can draw our attention away from more important things.

Prayer: Holy Creator, help me to be thankful for all the good things you have given me. May I use them to enhance my enjoyment of life while sharing them with others. Give me strength and wisdom to keep my primary focus on heavenly things, and not allow an obsession with earthly things to distract me. Amen.

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