Sunday, 28th June 2026

Strangers on Earth, Citizens of Heaven

Living as Pilgrims With Purpose Until We Reach Our Eternal Home

Text: Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 13:14; 1 Peter 2:11

My Dearest Christian Family,
Let us continue put our hands on the plough and not look back. Let us continue to be reminded by our beloved Triune God **Who** we are and **Whose** we are.

Our chief joyful duty in this life is always to glorify our beloved Lord Jesus and enjoy Him forever.

The Bible repeatedly reminds God's people that they are not at home in this world. The Christian is a pilgrim, a stranger, an exile, a temporary resident passing through a foreign land on the way to a better country.

The world tells us to settle down, accumulate possessions, pursue comfort, and seek earthly glory. But Scripture calls us to lift our eyes above the horizon of this fallen world and fix them upon our eternal inheritance in Christ.

Abraham lived in tents. Moses chose affliction with God's people rather than the treasures of Egypt. David confessed that he was only a stranger on earth. The apostles viewed themselves as pilgrims. Above all, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself had "no place to lay His head" (Luke 9:58).

The Christian life is therefore a pilgrimage from grace to glory.

As John Bunyan beautifully portrayed in The Pilgrim's Progress, every believer is traveling from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City.

Today we shall consider three great truths:

1. Our True Citizenship
2. Our Pilgrim Lifestyle
3. Our Future Hope

I. OUR TRUE CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN

Philippians 3:20
"But our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul wrote these words while living under the mighty Roman Empire.

Roman citizenship was a prized privilege. Yet Paul reminds believers that there is a far greater citizenship than Rome.

The believer belongs to Heaven.

Our names are written in Heaven.

Our King reigns in Heaven.

Our inheritance is reserved in Heaven.

Our home is Heaven.

The Christian may temporarily reside on earth, but he permanently belongs to Heaven.

Hebrews 13:14
“For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.”

Every earthly kingdom rises and falls.
Babylon fell.
Persia fell.
Greece fell.
Rome fell.

Empires vanish like mist before the morning sun.

Yet there is a city that shall never fall—the New Jerusalem.

The believer’s heart is set upon that city.

John Calvin wrote:
“If Heaven is our country, what can the earth be but a place of exile? If departure from the world is entrance into life, what is the world but a sepulcher?”
(Institutes of the Christian Religion)

How differently we would live if we remembered this daily!

Many Christians live as though this world is their permanent address.

They invest everything here.

They think only of earthly success.

They fear losing earthly comforts.

Yet Scripture says we are travelers, not settlers.

II. PILGRIMS MUST LIVE DIFFERENTLY FROM THE WORLD

1 Peter 2:11
“Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.”

Peter connects our identity with our conduct.

Because we are strangers, we must not imitate the culture around us.

Pilgrims travel lightly.

Pilgrims refuse to become attached to things that hinder the journey.

Pilgrims maintain loyalty to their homeland.

The Christian belongs to another kingdom.

Therefore, our values, ambitions, priorities, and morality must reflect Heaven.

1 Peter 1:17
“Live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.”

Notice Peter says “your time.”

Life on earth is temporary.

A tourist does not build permanent foundations in a hotel.

Likewise, Christians should never root their hearts in a passing world.

Thomas Watson said:
“The world is but an inn where we are to stay a night, and then be gone.”

What wisdom!

People spend their entire lives decorating an inn they must soon leave.

The wise believer prepares instead for eternity.

The Pilgrim's Battle

Peter warns us:
"Abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul."

Pilgrims face enemies.
The world opposes us.
The flesh battles us.
The devil seeks to destroy us.

The Christian life is not a vacation cruise but a spiritual warfare.

Once again, John Owen famously said "Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you."

A pilgrim cannot afford spiritual compromise.

Every sinful attachment becomes baggage slowing the journey.

Every worldly affection weakens our love for Christ.

Every compromise dims our vision of Heaven.

Therefore, believers must walk in holiness.

III. THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE ALWAYS BEEN STRANGERS

The pilgrim identity did not begin in the New Testament.

It runs throughout the entire Bible.

Hebrews 11:13
"They admitted that they were foreigners and strangers on earth."

This chapter describes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the saints of old.

What united them?
Faith.

Faith enabled them to see beyond earthly realities.
Faith allowed them to endure hardship.
Faith fixed their gaze upon eternal promises.

Hebrews 11:16
“Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one.”

They looked beyond earthly possessions.

They sought heavenly treasures.

They looked beyond temporary comforts.

They desired eternal glory.

Abraham

God promised Abraham a land, yet Abraham spent much of his life living in tents.

Why?
Because he understood that Canaan pointed beyond itself.

Hebrews 11:10
“For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

Abraham’s eyes were fixed upon Heaven.

David's Confession

Psalm 119:19
"I am a stranger on earth."

David was king.
He possessed wealth.
He commanded armies.
Yet he still considered himself a stranger.

Earthly status did not change heavenly reality.

1 Chronicles 29:15
"We are foreigners and strangers in your sight… Our days on earth are like a shadow."

What a humbling reminder.

Life is a shadow.
A vapor.
A breath.

James echoes this truth:
“What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” (James 4:14)

IV. EARTHLY LIFE IS TEMPORARY

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the brevity of life.

Moses prayed:
“Teach us to number our days.” (Psalm 90:12)

The average person lives as though death is far away.

Yet cemeteries remind us daily that life is fragile.

Every funeral sermon preaches:
“Your turn is coming.”

The Christian does not fear death because death is not the end.

Death is the doorway into glory.

Richard Baxter wrote:
“Lord, make me know my end and the measure of my days.”

Baxter often meditated upon heaven.

He advised believers:
“Live as men that are going to die, and die as men that are going to live.”

That is biblical wisdom.

V. THE PILGRIM’S HOPE IS ETERNAL GLORY

The Christian’s focus is not on what is behind Him but what lies ahead.

Hebrews 13:14
“We are looking for the city that is to come.”

Colossians 3:2
“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

In Matthew 6:19-20 our beloved Lord Jesus reminds us:
“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth… but store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven.”

The believer’s greatest treasure is not earthly wealth.

It is Christ Himself.

Heaven is glorious not merely because of golden streets.

Heaven is glorious because Christ is there.

Jonathan Edwards said:
“The enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.”

The saints long for Heaven because they long for Christ.

The Christian does not merely desire a better place.

He desires a better Person.

VI. THE PILGRIM'S FINAL DESTINATION

One day the journey will end.

Faith shall become sight.

Prayer shall become praise.

Struggle shall become victory.

Tears shall become joy.

Crosses shall become crowns.

The trumpet shall sound.

Christ shall return.

The dead shall be raised.

The saints shall be glorified.

And we shall dwell forever with the Lord.

Revelation 21:3
“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.”

Revelation 22:4
“They shall see His face.”

That is the ultimate hope of every pilgrim.

To see Christ.

To worship Christ.

To enjoy Christ forever.

Samuel Rutherford wrote:
“Oh, my Lord Jesus Christ, if I could be in Heaven without Thee, it would be a hell; and if I could be in hell and have Thee still, it would be a Heaven to me.”

Such is the heart of a true pilgrim.

Conclusion

Christian, never forget **Who** you are and **Whose** you are.

You are a citizen of heaven.

You are a beloved child of our beloved Abba Father God.

You are a beloved bride of our beloved Christ.

You are a stranger on earth.

You are passing through a temporary world.

You are traveling toward an eternal Kingdom.

Therefore:

- Hold earthly possessions loosely.
- Pursue holiness diligently.
- Fight sin relentlessly.

- Fix your eyes upon Christ continually.
- Long for heaven earnestly.

The world is not our home.

Our true home is with Christ.

As the old saints often said:
“We are not home yet.”
We are pilgrims with purpose.

But soon the pilgrimage will end.

Soon we shall cross the river.

Soon we shall enter the Celestial City.

Soon we shall behold the King in His beauty.

And then, forever and ever, we shall be at home, marinating in His glory with joy without end.
Amen, Amen, Amen.

Much love,
Francis