

Citizens Of Another Kingdom: A Clash of Cultures: From Culture Shock to Heavenly Citizenship

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[0:00] Let me share with you tonight, I was very scared. As an eight year old, I entered into a foreign country and my family went and lived in a migrant hostel.

! I know what it's like to be different, to enter a strange country. And everything was weird in this country. The people spoke funny.

And they made jokes that I didn't understand. And I must have been a bit of a cheeky kid because there was one classroom and it was a two-storey classroom. And I annoyed the teacher that day. I don't know how I could be an annoying sort of person, but I was an annoying person back then. And I annoyed this teacher so much and they told me, go and jump out the window. And I thought she was really, I thought she was serious. I thought she actually meant to. Because Aussie humour was something new to me. It took me a while to get my head around it. And I still remember the culture shock.

[1:05] The culture shock of coming to Australia. This foreign land. Because really I'm from the motherland, you know, Pommie land. And so I'm still getting my head around the culture shock of being in Australia.

And especially one day when the time came for sports and they wanted to go and play some footy. And they came out with this funny shaped ball. And I thought there's something wrong with this ball. It's not a proper one. It's not a round one. And so it wasn't a real ball. It was this oval shaped ball. Of course, an Aussie football. And I wanted to give it a go.

But I still didn't understand that game with the weird shaped ball. I still don't get it. I probably need some instruction from, where's the lad? The umpire guy.

Maybe I need some training to know how to kick that ball. You know, just don't get it. But, you know, you see, I'm from a different culture. And of course it's easier for me because I'm from an English speaking culture being from England.

[2:05] But imagine what it would be like coming to Australia, not knowing the language, not knowing the culture. It was bad enough for me as a pommy. And so we're talking tonight about a clash of cultures, if you like.

This clash of cultures that, as believers, we're citizens of another kingdom. Citizens of another kingdom. And it's like this clash of cultures that we still have.

As God's people living in the world, that we have a clash. There's a difference about us. And how, as God's dear children, we're called to be citizens of a heavenly kingdom.

We are different. And Philippians 3 verse 20 reads, For our conversation is in heaven. From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our conversation, or you could put it, our citizenship is in heaven. So in other words, we're not of this world. Our culture is different as God's people.

[3:06] So we're going to unpack that a little. How we are a set apart kind of people. So the world at large that doesn't know the Saviour, that is really God-less and Christ-denying, is contrary to us.

It's different. And so we look at our identity as, as the Bible calls us, you and me, as pilgrims and strangers.

This is not our permanent home. I mean, my passport says that I'm a permanent resident of Australia, but that's not really true. Because I'm a permanent resident of heaven.

So are you, if you're saved. And as much as I've been naturalized, so they call me an Aussie now, I'm kind of a fake Aussie, that really my citizenship, well, it is Australian and it is from the UK, but

I've got another citizenship.

It's in heaven. And so have you that are saved here tonight. One day we're going to take up our residence there in our eternal home. That is where we belong, isn't it?

[4:08] So the Bible talks about these two kingdoms, the kingdom of this world, that's ruled by Satan, and then the kingdom of God. And of Satan, it tells us he is the God, small g, of this world.

And he's blinded the minds of them, which believe not. Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. Thank God when the light comes in, when the light goes on, when we see the light, isn't it?

When we see the gospel light. And the other kingdom is the kingdom of God. And it tells there that Christ is the one reigning as supreme, as the king. And of him it tells us who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son.

And every soul belongs to one kingdom or the other. And through faith in Christ we're translated. It's like we've been relocated from that kingdom into God's kingdom, haven't we?

By faith in Christ. And the Bible calls you and me that believe, calls us pilgrims and strangers. Now some are a bit stranger than others, but we're strange in the sense that we're different.

[5:24] And strange from this world. Our belonging isn't to this world. There's a strangeness about us, which is a good thing. 1 Peter 2.11 tells us that. Peter says, Beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

There's a new identity that you have as saved people. And it impacts really every facet of our life. Our speech, our actions, our mindset, our hope, until our Saviour comes.

And there's instructions for us as the citizens of heaven. So let's have a look. Firstly, consider our distinct identity.

You have a distinct identity. It's like I felt coming here from England, I was different. There's a distinction. There's a distinct identity.

And for you that believe, it tells us we're strangers and pilgrims, we're citizens of heaven, and also we're ambassadors for Christ. Firstly, we see that we are strangers and pilgrims.

[6:32] It tells us that in Hebrews 11.13, of the saints of old, they confess that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. So living by faith in a foreign land.

We're temporary residents here. And our Lord tells us how we are not of this world. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. John 17.16, as he prays, he says, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Like Christ, we are distinct from the world's values and systems and goals. Think of this term, citizen of heaven. It tells us there that we are fellow citizens with the saints.

Philippians 3.20, our conversation or our citizenship is in heaven. In other words, we're governed by another king and his laws.

Our allegiance really, as much as we love Australia, and we might have other loyalties of national background, but our love, our allegiance is firstly to the kingdom of God, to the king of kings.

[7:44] And we who were once alienated, it tells us, we're now no more strangers and foreigners. We're fellow citizens, and we're part of the household of God, the family of God.

Hebrews 13 says, Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Yeah, the new Jerusalem. And what's more, we're ambassadors too.

Now then, are we ambassadors for Christ? As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. So we represent our heavenly king in a hostile land.

Now, there was a time I used to work for the Australian government, the Commonwealth government, and I had some aspirations to be an ambassador. But I didn't have enough qualifications to go for that one, so I missed out.

But I thought that would be the ultimate, wouldn't it? To be an ambassador for Australia in another land, to represent our nation, our government on a foreign soil. An ambassador for Australia, wouldn't that be something?

[8:45] But actually, you're much more. You're an ambassador for Christ, for the kingdom of God. That's something really precious, isn't it? Very

special. An ambassador for Christ, that you represent him on this planet. And our Lord says, my kingdom is not of this world. So we know that the kingdom of our Lord, it's eternal. It's forever. Think of it, that we, like foreigners, we don't adopt the customs, speech or priorities of this world that we live in.

Because we're just passing through. Now, of course, I've become a little bit more Aussie over time. I used to talk properly. I used to have the Coronation Street accent. So I can demonstrate that for you later, but I won't attempt it publicly.

But, you know, I used to talk funny, you know, like the Pommies. Like the school and pool. Now I've got to say school, school, pool. Like the Victorians say it different, don't they?

They still say it that way. But we're not of this culture. The point I'm kind of making is that we're different. There's a distinction. Even in our speech. And as Christians, our speech is different.

[9:57] We don't tell the same vulgar words. God helping us. We won't use the crude and crass language of the world. Our priorities are different. Our mindset's different.

Our thinking's different. And we're just passing through. Like the song goes, this world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.

Isn't that true? Our treasures laid up in heaven. As Matthew 6 tells us, our Lord says, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

And I know some of you had that experience lately. Someone breaking in and stealing. Hey, it can happen to any of us. It's happened to us. But lay up for yourselves rather treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. It's talking about priorities, isn't it? Actually, heavenly priorities are more important than some kind of material priorities that we might have.

[11:02] Think of an ambassador in a foreign land. They still live by the laws and culture of their homeland, not the host country. And that little parcel of real estate that is the embassy is actually their homeland, soil, on another land.

And think of it for yourself. There's a big deal for you that you are an ambassador for Christ. So that you actually represent him. And people know that. Hey, oh, there goes a Christian.

They keep an eye on you and they watch what you do, don't they? But be a good ambassador. And a good ambassador. Live as heaven's representative. And so as an ambassador, we represent our king's values, not the world's values.

So number one, we've got a distinct identity. Secondly, you could consider we've got a distinct worldview. Like the way we see things, the lens through which we look at life and the world in general.

Notice how we are distinct in our worldview. You could consider, as we'll unpack a little, of heavenly values versus atheistic culture. Look at the Christ-denying culture of our world.

[12:13] We see how we are distinct. Well, we've got an authority that's different. We've got a mindset that's different. We've actually got truth as the foundation. That establishes morality. And we've got a purpose that is different.

So think about the distinct worldview that we have. Now, for the world that doesn't know the Saviour, it tells that the fool has said in his heart, there is no God.

The one who denies God's authority, it tells of them that they're in this dread condition. They're corrupt. They've done abominable works. There is none that doeth good.

For the godless, they deny God's authority. There is no God, they say. And they exalt human reason. And we see it pictured in Romans 1, where it talks about of the God deniers, the God defiers.

In Romans 1, 21, it tells of them, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God. Neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations. And their foolish heart was darkened.

[13:21] Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. They deny God's authority. They defy God's authority. And they exalt human reason. Becoming vain in their imaginations, as if they set the rules.

And we see this kind of mindset of the world. That it promotes pride and it relies upon pleasure, the worldly way of thinking. For example, 1 John 2, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

It's that mindset of the world. That it puts the world's ways, the world's pleasures seeking, the world's rebellious, prideful nature above God's authority.

And another thing about the godless world is that it sees truth as relative. And of course, it tells us rather that the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

[14:29] So in contrast with the world that's going to pass away, and all the loves and the passing fancies of the world, that's all going to pass away. But it says you that have the will of God, you that are trusting Christ, you are going to have everlasting strength.

You will abide forever. But the godless world sees truth as something relative. And it tells further in Romans 1, how the godless, they change the truth of God into a lie.

They worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. The godless world, it sees truth as relative in that morality is flexible, that they kind of set the rules.

And we know in Romans 1, as you see the whole context of that chapter, it talks about how they define what they think is right, they do what's right in their own eyes. And the worldly, Christ-denying, godless kind of culture, it misses the mark on all of these dimensions, like truth, morality, purpose.

We see that the world is really under Satan's sway. It tells that we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness. 1 John 5, 19.

[15:41] Even, you could say, in the domain of the evil one, we see that it's under the wicked one's control. And Ephesians 2 talks about the god of this world as also being a prince, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

The world lies under Satan's sway. And so this is what the world mistakenly follows, this self-made kind of truth, of morality, of purpose.

And they have values, so-called, but we know that they're godless and antichrist. And what's the consequences of such a worldly, wise thinking?

It tells how of these that deny the Saviour, that they do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do things which are not convenient.

The falsehoods that they have of truth, so-called, of morality, so-called, of purpose, so-called, are really falsehoods.

[16:52] And the godless ways of our world, they lead to moral relativism and self-destruction and despair. Notice there it says that they have a reprobate mind.

What does that mean? The sins of mind are no longer able to discern right from wrong. They just set their own rules. And it's also connected with uncleanness and vile affections in the context.

So this is what happens with people who continually reject God. They don't want to retain God in their knowledge. They don't want to know God. And so God's given them over to this reprobate mind such that they can't discern right from wrong.

And it leads to uncleanness, vile affections, and misery. And God lets them go that way, their own way. And they begin doing those things that were not right.

Doing those things which are not convenient. Which speaks of doing those things which are morally wrong, shameful, unnatural. And Romans 1.28, really, when you think about it, it's a downward spiral, isn't it?

[17:57] They didn't want to retain God in their knowledge. Then their mind gets corrupted. They're doing things which are shameful and unnatural and wrong. And it means actions improper, shameful, against God's design.

That's the world today, isn't it? We see they set their own agenda, their own values. Their Christ-denying thinking just takes over. So I'm going to contrast all of that now with rather what we

ought to aspire to.

What we can have as God's people, as those that are different, distinct. The alternative to the Christ-denying thinking is rather to have the foundation of truth.

So those that are saved, the Christian mindset, the different culture that we have as God's people, is rooted in God's truth. It's planted in truth.

As our Lord says, sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. He's talking about the word of God, saying the word of God is truth. And of course we know it's our absolute standard.

[18:58] 2 Timothy 3 talks about how it's profitable for all of our living as believers. And we've got a different authority that's a sure authority compared to the flaky authority of the unsaved.

We've got a different authority. We've got truth to stand on. And it's sure, it's God's truth. And our purpose is different too, in that we have a purpose to glorify God.

So rather than the vanity and the emptiness and the fleshliness and the worldly wise thinking, our priority, our purpose is rather, hey, what can I do for the glory of God?

What can I do to please my God, my Saviour? And whatever I do, I want to do that to the glory of God. So there's a different allegiance. There's a different mindset that shapes our decisions.

And we've got an absolute standard of truth. We're different. That's the point, that we're distinct.

And our morality is not subjective about feelings, about what we say or think.

[20:02] Our morality is objective. It's in black and white. It's in the book. It's in a book. Morality is objective. That's the difference.

That's what makes us distinct. And it's revealed in God's law, of course, as well.

And we can take really an eternal perspective too. That we don't have this passing mindset of the world that's going to pass away. But we've got an eternal dimension.

It tells how we can set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Not some carnal worldly views. But we can set our affection, our love, our devotion on things above, on heavenly things.

And it tells, Paul tells the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 4, we look not at the things that are seen, not just what we can see with our eyes, the tangible, but at the things which are not seen.

Well, the things which are seen, the tangible things, are temporal. But the things which are not seen are eternal. There's a heavenly dimension. Think about how this translates into real life.

[21:00] For example, we see biblical examples like Daniel. Daniel was different. Amen. He was distinct. It says of Daniel, he refused to defile himself with the godless ways of his day.

And he stood out from the godless culture. He said no to the king's meat, to the king's wine. He said no. He was different. He purposed in his heart to have a godly purpose.

We see Noah as another example, a righteous man, a just man, perfect in his generations. He was willing to do something quite different from the world. Building an ark is pretty radical, isn't it?

He was pretty distinct. We can think, how can we counter the culture of our day? And we face it at the work site, in the workplace, in the home place, in the social place, in the school place, in the uni place.

That we're in this world, but we're not of it. There's a difference about you. A difference, a distinction. Sometimes it's hard. Like I've found as a youngster, you know, I got teased like mad.

[22:02] You can imagine being called Pommy all the time. And then a time came actually when my family, we uprooted from Australia and we went back to England to live. And then they were calling me Aussie.

So I couldn't win. So, you know, we're different. All right? That's the point, isn't it? And as a Christian, you're different, aren't you? We're meant to be. God helping us, that we're not afraid to be different.

Don't be afraid to be different. It's really the point of the message tonight, is that we can be counter-cultural. Don't be afraid to say, help me, I'm a Christian now. I don't do that anymore. And that can be a tough thing to do, especially when it's your mates, people that know you.

I know that came from me, even in the school time, because I was saved as a teenager. And, you know, having that stand for Christ, even then.

And you know who your friends are then. And who will stand with you, even though you say, I'm a Christian. I'm a Christian. The song Don't Want to Know You after that. And that's okay, because we want to stand for Christ, don't we?

[23:03] And it ought to be that our worldview filters every choice. The media, relationships. Does this honour my King? Can we be like Daniel, like Noah?

Another thought is that our conduct is distinct as well. There's a way that we're separated. There's a way that we have a submission that's different.

Our language is different. Our actions, our relationships, and our hope. What does our culture translate into in our daily living?

Now, you see in the media, sometimes they blast. It could be even sports stars, don't they? Some footy players got caught in some scandal. And it's front page news. Because the footballs, even the footy players have got a code of conduct.

They've got a certain expected code of conduct. As we know in the military, in the public sector, in every really employment relationship, there's a certain code of conduct.

[24:06] And there's a certain conduct that's becoming of a believer, of a holy walk. Because even if the footy players have got a code, a culture of what's expected of them, how much more oughtn't we to have expectations from our Lord that we want, hey, the expectations of my Lord matter to me.

And of course, we call to a holy walk. To live as conduct becoming of citizens of heaven. That's a big call, isn't it? To think, hey, I'm a citizen of heaven.

I'm not there yet, but I'm going to be. And for the meantime, I should be walking on this earth like I'm a citizen of heaven already. And so, as we read before, abstain from fleshly lusts.

Live like you're strange, like you're a pilgrim. And it says, come out from among them, be separate. There's a sense where, hey, we're distinct. We don't hang with the people we used to hang with in that friendship way.

And it says the friendship of the world is enmity is hostile towards God. So, godless philosophies, they don't serve as our compass. This does, the book. It's God's truth that guides what we ought to do, our conduct.

[25:21] And we reject humanism, evolution, the careless carnality. And we're called to a new submission to be holy as he is holy. And to submit ourselves to God, to resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

So, there's a different submission that we have. And also, there's a different language that we have, too. When you think about it, our culture shows in our language, doesn't it?

Just like, as a little lad, my language had to change for me to stop getting picked on. Mind you, I still get picked on. But my language, I'm sounding a little bit more Australian as time goes by.

Just like my language as a foreigner in Australia changed, think about, hey, when I get saved, my language changes, doesn't it? In a way, we rather speak the language of love, we speak the language of grace.

Ephesians 4.29 tells us, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. But that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. We want to speak words that edify, that build up.

[26:29] Words that build, words that encourage, words that uplift, words that are good. And let your speech be always seasoned with salt, with grace. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.

I know I talked about that just recently last weekend, too. But it doesn't hurt to hear it again, does it?

Let your speech always be. Be always with grace. And as saved people, we think, hey, those profanities that we used to say, the blasphemy, the foolish jesting, hey, that's not me anymore. That's the old man. I'm not that man anymore. What we say and what we do, it shows, our faith shows through that. God will help you.

It may not happen overnight for some. It can take a while. Sometimes those habits of how to say things, of speaking, of actions, sometimes those things take a while to drop off.

And God's gracious. He works with us. And as God's people, we see that our actions change, too. Only yet, let your conversation, like your way of living, be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

[27:36] Can we have that way of living such that it's becoming? Like they say of officers, don't they, in the military. Conduct becoming. Conduct that's becoming of the rank, of the officer, of the military person.

But how much more should we have conduct becoming? Of the king's kids. Of God's people.

Conduct becoming. That our conversation, our conduct is becoming of the gospel.

That it doesn't conflict. Yeah, you're talking like you're a Christian because it matches. And so as we live out our faith as a testimony for our Lord, we can be like light shining in a dark place.

And it tells how we can be doing things heartily as to the Lord. And it tells how we can be like a light shining in a dark place. Think of it, brother, sister, you're an ambassador.

You're an ambassador for Christ. And that's wherever you are. It's not just at the church zone, in the church space on the Sunday. But hey, it's 24-7.

[28:41] It's by 365. So it's at your fair dinkum all the time. God helping you. You're going to keep your light shining. Even when you're getting rankled or things happen that you don't like.

And situations happen that test out your testimony. That you're going to be a light shining. A light shining. It's going to keep on shining. And as God's people, our faith should show in our relationships too.

It tells how, By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.

Have that love that overcomes our own impatience, our own inclination to not be wise.

That love will overrule. And it affects who we want to hang with too, as we talked about before. To not be unequally yoked. To avoid those unhealthy, ungodly alliances.

And have no fellowship. There's times where you've got to say, hey, I'm not going to have fellowship with that because it's unfruitful. It's not going to help me. So as God's people, our faith shows too, in that we have a different hope as well.

[29:47] We're looking for that blessed hope. The glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Our hope is not in politics, as much as we hope that the politicians will change.

Our hope is not in the politics of our nation. No matter who's in charge. It's not found in politics. It's not found in worldly wealth. It's not found in man's machinations.

But our blessed hope, that certain sure hope, is our coming Saviour. That's what motivates us, isn't it? So in all of these things, we know that Christ is our example too.

It says he tabernacled amongst us. He dwelt amongst us. John 1.14. In his mission, it says, the Son of Man have not where to lay his head. Matthew 8.20. He wasn't kind of consumed with the world's comforts.

He rather caught us to sacrifice. And then we see Paul on Mars Hill confronting the culture of his day. He was willing to reason with the philosophers of his day to confront error with truth.

[30:47] What about you and me? Can we be strangers and pilgrims? That's my plea for you tonight. To think, how can I be more of a stranger? How can I be more of an alien, as it were, a foreigner?

You know, there are aliens in the Bible. It's you and me. We're meant to be foreigners, aren't we? We're meant to be strangers. We're meant to be, as it were, different from the world. That we're from another world.

In a reality that we have something that our world desperately needs. And we have got a distinct assurance, too. When you think about it, for you and me that are saved here tonight, you've got a better country.

A better country than any earthly country. You've got a hope that will help you through beyond any trials of life. And you've got that ultimate, the blessed hope. So think of it as you have that mindset of being a pilgrim and a stranger.

That you've got a distinct assurance. You've got a heavenly hope. We're living for a world to come. And really, this world's not a home. We're just passing through. And there's that reality, isn't it?

[31:52] That truth that we're a pilgrim. I know, I like the song that John Bunyan wrote as the author of Pilgrim's Progress. And it says, And then it talks about how, And then it talks about those who beset him round, try to discourage him.

He says, No foe shall stay his might. Though he with giants fight, he will make good his right to be a pilgrim. And then it talks about how, Since Lord thou dost defend us with thy spirit, We know he at the end shall life inherit.

Then fancies flee away. All this worldly occupations, the worldly distractions are going to fly away, it says. I'll fear not what men say.

I'll labour night and day to be a pilgrim. There's a lot of truth in that song. To think how we can be a pilgrim. And it's by the grace of God, isn't it? As we put our trust in Christ, we have that assurance. As someone confessed to me tonight, they've trusted Christ as their Saviour. There's an assurance now. Because it says, If we believe on the name of the Son of God, We know that we have eternal life.

[33:12] We know that we're his. He's ours and we're his forever, for eternity. We've got a hope that's a blessed hope. It's an eternal hope. We've got a better country. As it tells of Abraham, that he looked for a city.

He looked for this city, it says, which hath foundations. His builder and maker is God. And it tells of Abraham that he looked for such a city. And then it says that for only others, for we, the faithful, it says, They desire a better country that isn't heavenly.

Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. For he hath prepared for them a city. Now the Lord Jesus says, I'll go to prepare a place for you. He says, there are many mansions. I'll go to prepare a place for you.

That where I am, there you may be also. Believe it here tonight. You've got a city that he's preparing. He's preparing a mansion for you. A heavenly dwelling. And we can know, as Abraham did, of that better country by faith.

We can know that we have an eternal home ahead. And for the meantime, there's some sufferings, some challenges. It says that even the sufferings of this present time, they can't be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.

[34:30] And it tells how our light affliction, you know, this time of suffering and in the context for Paul, he did go through some pretty serious stuff. And he says, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us so far more exceeding an eternal weight of glory.

So any struggles that we might have, this side of glory, it's light. It's limited. It's slight in the scheme of eternity, of that eternal glory.

And even though we'd be hated by the world. And John 15, 19, our Lord says, you can expect that the world's going to hate you. That's John 15, 19. Even though we hate it by the world.

And that could come to you. You know, you start to stand up for Christ. And I've been in workplaces where, you know, I got knocked now and again, because they knew that I was a believer. And we've just got to keep on pressing on.

Don't let it stop you from being a testimony. Even though the world hate you. He says, know that it hated me before I hated you. And so let's be those strangers and pilgrims. It tells about the blessed hope that we have.

[35:35] It says it purifies us. One day he shall appear and we shall be like him. It tells how we've got this hope in us that purifies us. And it tells how that one day there'll be no more curse.

The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in heaven in that eternal home. And it says his servants shall serve him. So you've got a blessed hope believer here tonight.

You've got a distinct hope different from any hope, any supposed hope the world would have.

We've got an eternal hope. It's a blessed hope and it's a sure hope. And it's guaranteed by the very word of God that there's a throne and the Lamb's going to be there and we're going to serve him.

We're going to have fellowship for eternity. So just to wrap up, think about also the distinct resolve that we can have in the light of all of this that we've been talking about.

How are we to live? We'll touch on these themes just quickly. Some practical tips. How to live out kingdom culture. The kingdom of God culture on this planet.

[36:38] And here's some little tips we could think about. Think about to not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Let the word of God renew your mind.

Soak your mind in scripture. Soak your mind with this. That will help you to have strength. It will help you to have wisdom when you need it. Those words will come to your mind when you need it. Those promises will come to your heart when you want to confess them and claim them. Soak yourself in the scripture. Transform, renew your mind. And also cast down those imaginations. When the enemy wants to set up something that's going to be destructive, cast that down. Every high thing that exalts of itself against the knowledge of God. Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. That's a big call there, isn't it? That every thought should be brought unto him, under his domain. That every thought that it should be captured and brought under his dominion, under his control. That's a good mind control there. That every thought is under Christ.

[37:45] And then we see we should guard our affections as we said before. Set your affection on things above. And Proverbs 4.23 talks about out of the heart comes the direction for life.

What we love shapes our life. Proverbs 4.23. We want to grow our love for Christ. That's what matters. That's the ultimate. That our affection is heavenwards. That our affection is Christwards. Then that love, that love of our Savior is going to shape our life. And help us to live in his will. Philippians 4 talks about whatsoever things are lovely, true, honest, just, pure.

Think on these things. Determine to think that way. Rather than worldly thinking. I know Julie, she likes to give me an encouragement. Hey, don't think about that.

Think about the good. We've got to shift our thinking, don't we? Easy to think about, hey, negativity, negative thoughts, negative situations, negative people, negative tests and trials of life.

[38:49] No. Set your affection on things above. Switch your thinking to those things that are honest, true, just, pure, etc. We can have that wonderful assurance.

So, also, just another thought is to be ready always to give an answer of that hope that you have. Be ready as a witness. And shine as lights.

Walk in the Spirit. Be that vessel that you're walking in his ways. Walk in the Spirit. Don't not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

And also, be not weary in well-doing. Hey, sometimes we're going to get weary. The flesh gets weak. We can be subject to earthly strains and weakness.

Don't be weary in well-doing. Keep on. Keep on pressing on. Reaping time is going to come. But we've got to press on regardless.

[39:48] Now, brother, sister, hey, life's going to be throwing tough things. There's always the curveballs. There's the things that are going to dog our steps. We're going to get discouragements. We're going to have natural tiredness and weariness.

Weariness of the flesh and spirit. But in due season, we shall reap if we faint not. There's a promise there. Keep on planting. Keep on serving.

Keep on pressing on. Faint not. Faint not. The Lord is with you. I trust that we can see in what I've talked about tonight, lots of ways we can be distinct, as in my earthly example of me as a young lad and how I was different, I was distinct.

And, hey, we want to be distinct as God's people. We want to be uncompromising in this world, this hostile world, to be shining as lights, as we talked about, as the church of God, the people of God should be like this city set on a hill.

We are the light of the world. We're the light that the world needs. The world needs the church. The world needs you and me. As God's people, when I say the church, I mean every believer. It really isn't it.

[41:03] The world needs you to be that light, to be that city set on a hill as pilgrims. And our Lord, our King is sending you, each one of you.

You're all commissioned. You've all got an ambassadorship. You're sent to speak as ambassadors, to be his witnesses. We've got a better country. And here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

How can we take this challenge tonight to put this into action? How can we be willing to be different, to stand out, to resolve to be a pilgrim, to be a pilgrim?

When you think how you're living, can you question maybe your actions and decisions? When you have a decision to make, well, would my King approve of this before we do it? It's a good question, isn't it? You think, well, the ambassador, before they make some statement, before they make some public address, they want to check with the King first. They want to check with the authority first.

[42:09] What would my King approve of? And we think we're a stranger. We're a foreigner in a strange land. You're a stranger, a pilgrim, a citizen of heaven, an ambassador.

We're distinct. So you're going to stand out, whether you like it or not, really. You can't help but stand out if you are a professing Christian in this godless culture. And this culture, think of it, it lacks truth.

It lacks morality. It lacks purpose. Whereas we have truth. We're founded on truth. And it's not our own truth of our own opinion or making. It's truth that's an absolute truth, a final authority.

So our purpose is to glorify God, to have that eternal dimension. Our conduct is framed by what is holy, not by what is worldly philosophy.

Our submission to God is what guides our decisions. Our culture shows in our language. It ought to. Our actions, our relationships.

[43:09] And we're assured of a better country. Brother, sister, there's a better country. Better country than Australia, as much as it's a good one. So set your affection on things above. Determine to be a pilgrim.

To be willing to be different. To be willing to stand out. Pray that you'd be encouraged in that tonight. Of course, we're speaking to believers. To be a pilgrim, you've got to be saved.

You've got to know the Savior. And once you know the Savior, there's an eternal home. There's an eternal dimension that impacts your everyday. Here below.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you give us grace to save us, to give us that wonderful message of redemption, of salvation.

Lord, such that we can be different. Lord, we know sometimes it's hard to be different. When the world would try to conform us, and the world would mock and pick on us and tease us.

[44:05] Lord, help us to be strong. Each one here tonight. To walk in your ways. To strengthen our faith. Help us, Lord, to grow. That we can be a pilgrim.

And not be afraid. Not be ashamed. Not be remiss. Lord, to be wise about our living, our words, our actions, our relationships.

Lord, help us to ever have that mindset. What would please my King? That we would think about that, Lord. What would please you? Above all else, we pray. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.