



Links Players

7 WHO AM I?: A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN

But our citizenship is in heaven. (Philippians 3:20, NIV)

IT'S HARD TO CHOOSE THE MOST FAMOUS OF ALL TRIANGLES. It could be the Isosceles, which is fun to say even if we can't remember that it's the one with two sides of equal length. Then there is the Bermuda, that triangle into which ships and planes have disappeared without certain explanation. But more famous than these may be the triangle that illustrates Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It's likely the most memorable remnant from your college psychology class.

Maslow, you'll recall, suggested that humans have needs beginning with the physiological—food, warmth, rest—and moving upwards through the hierarchy to self-actualization, or the achievement of one's full potential. For golfers, the bad news is we will probably never “top out” according to Maslow. We'll always leave shots out on the course. But the good news is that the game goes a long way in fulfilling the need right in the middle of the triangle: the need for belonging. Golf is built around clubs and foursomes, both of which give us a familiar, safe place to hang out.

But like all earthly establishments, golf clubs only go so far. The best place of belonging we will ever find is in the arms of Jesus.

I know, this is a quaint picture in some ways. It would play dangerously close to the sentimentalism we find in Christian greeting cards or on cheesy Facebook graphics. Except that John leaned into Jesus' shoulder and sought the assurance of Christ's words. To be one with Christ is to belong as we have not belonged before.

Paul took up this same theme when he told the Philippians that our citizenship as believers is in heaven. Our place of citizenship is the place where we legally belong, but far greater than this, it is home!

The *but* at the beginning of Philippians 3:20 denotes a contrast to what has come before. In the preceding verses, Paul wrote of the tragic condition of those whose minds were fixed on earthly things. “Their destiny,” he wrote, “is their destruction.” What a tragedy, for they will have no place to belong.

Let us rejoice today in the eternal glory we will share with Christ. It gives us the belonging of citizens now and forever. Our lowly bodies will be made glorious, a fresh identity we can all embrace!

Opening questions How has golf given you a place to belong through the years? What are the advantages of an earthly home? What are its limitations?

READING Philippians 3:17 – 4:1; 1 Peter 2:11-12; Hebrews 11:13-16

Earth and heaven (Philippians 3)

What contrasts did Paul offer between the way of the world and the way of those whose citizenship is in heaven? Why do you think we are still tempted to love earthly things?

Strangers and aliens (1 Peter 2)

What exhortations did Peter give here? What should motivate us to live good lives?

A better country (Hebrews 11)

Do you find yourself longing for heaven as the ancients did? What hopes fill your mind when it comes to eternity?
