

# THE FIRST 15

Thursday, September 12, 2024

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Today is Thursday, September 12 and we are learning what the Bible says about Cornerstone.

## OPENING PRAYER

*My Lord and my God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I pause to rest in Your love this morning and seek Your presence in the stillness of a new day. As I strive to stand on Christ the Cornerstone, give me the firm foundation I need for my faith and build me into a living temple for Your Holy Spirit to dwell. Fill me with the love, joy and peace only You can provide. Undergird my thoughts, emotions and footsteps throughout the course of my day. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22***

## REFLECTION

The author of Ephesians tells us we are no longer foreigners and strangers to God. We who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord are called citizens and members of God's household. When you travel internationally there are barriers you must pass through every time you enter a different country. Official agents sit behind desks at international airports determining if you can pass through their border. They examine your credentials, your facial image, your fingerprints and they may ask you questions. Why are you coming into the country? What are you bringing with you? How long will you stay? At international borders you go through customs and immigration to enter a different country and then you do so again on return to the United States. You must keep your passport handy to identify yourself as a citizen of the U.S. to be allowed in.

In the same way, we pass through the border between earth and heaven. Foreigners and strangers are not allowed in, only citizens are. Through Jesus Christ we are able to be called "citizens" in the kingdom of God. Our eternal passports have been won with His shed blood. By virtue of our Baptism our citizenship is sealed on the passports of our souls - our name, our face, our fingerprints. We are identified. We are unique. We are known and claimed by God as citizens with all the saints. We are invited in. None of us could ever earn or deserve that kind of heavenly citizenship, but it is ours.

When we accept Jesus Christ, we become citizens of the kingdom as well as members of God's household. We become part of a new family. We are included in a community of faithful believers in the household of God. We might think we decided to "join" a church one day and become a member, but the reality is God called us there to be a part of that particular church family at that particular season of our life. The church is not just a place for parishioners to come

but a household where God chooses to live. God is building His people together into a place for Him to dwell. Believers are woven into a growing temple where Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone. We are collectively knit into a sacred spiritual space where the Holy Spirit resides and God dwells.

**Ask:** What are the privileges and responsibilities of being a citizen of God's kingdom? What does it mean for me to be built together with other believers as a holy temple for God to dwell?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Blessed and holy Lord, thank You that I am no longer a foreigner, but a fellow citizen with Your people. Thank You that I am no longer a stranger, but a member of Your household. A mighty dwelling place built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles of old with Jesus as the cornerstone. Build me together with other believers, join me with friends in the faith, weave us together to become a sacred space where Your Holy Spirit resides. Remind me of the privileges and responsibilities of being a citizen of Your heavenly kingdom. Amen.*