

Disciples Church

Joy in Contentment<>Philippians 4:10-23

Week of August 30, 2017

**Handout Notes**

* **From a Heart Beating for the Gospel - Do Good to Others**

Philippians 4:10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

* **Gratefulness and Rejoicing in the Lord Greatly**

Philippians 4:10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly ...

The good deeds of others towards Paul are worthy of thanksgiving, and the ultimate praise for even horizontal goodness goes to God.

* It is Christianly to have hearts of constant, authentic thankfulness.
* It is Christianly to have hearts that know God is the sovereign One behind every truly good thing, and therefore the ultimate thanksgiving and praise should be toward Him.
* **Christian Contentment**

Philippians 4:10-13,19

Philippians 4:11Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

Like with Paul’s example, we all are to learn from more mature believers around us.

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Philippians 4:12-13

**12**I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. **13**I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Think about the heights Paul has experienced, and also think about the insane hardships he’s endured … incredible. But he’s not saying that just to say it. He’s saying, “I’ve experience these things first hand, and God has sanctified me in and through it all.”

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

What it is not saying:

This verse has nothing to do with being promised the ability to have the outcome we each want in temporary circumstances.

What it is saying:

The immediate context of this verse and the consistent teaching from all of Scripture is that we—the redeemed—can obey God’s commandments, and we will do whatever God has determined for us before time, in the secret counsel of His own will.

1 John 5:2-4 2By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. **3**For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. **4**For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. …

For Paul, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me,” has included learning how to be Christ-like in contentment, whether in need or in prosperity. It was God’s will to take a wicked Pharisee like Paul and convert him, then train him to have Christian contentment in a vast spectrum of circumstances.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

This is the mystery behind “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” God is the one who strengthens and empowers Christians to do ALL that He wills and therefore causes. As we studied before, this happens by the Holy Spirit working in the saved to progressively change our affections, grow us in holiness, align our will to genuinely be to honor God’s will, and empower us to see through these things.

Hebrews 13:21 [May God] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight …

Ephesians 1:11 In [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will

Let’s revel in the truth Philippians 4:13 actually teaches, so we find comfort and help in our sovereign God to do through us what He has decreed! We don’t want a verse telling us we can do anything we want; we want a verse that tells us God will do anything He wants in and through us!

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Using himself as the example, Paul is teaching us that believers can have Christian contentment in all circumstances, because that is God’s commanded will for us.

Hebrews 13:5-6 **5**Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” **6**So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

What motivation and comfort does Hebrews 13:5-6 give for being content in all circumstances? Answer: God’s promises that He is sovereign and with us, just like we’ve seen so far tonight.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 6But godliness with contentment is great gain, **7**for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. **8**But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. **9**But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **10**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. …

There is so much temptation to have an *unhealthy desire* for riches in our rich culture. Notice how I say *unhealthy desire;* that’s because having “much” is not in itself evil. Having aspirations to be successful and have the fruit of that is not sinful. Nice things are not sinful, money is not sinful, *but the love of—the idolizing of—these things is evil*. That’s what this passage is getting at.

Do you know the Scripture encourages hard work that produces honest money? Such as:

Proverbs 10:4 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

Proverbs 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

So when Paul says, “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation,” he is talking about a certain kind of desire for riches—a sinful type.

There is nothing "more holy” about having little, not having expensive things, etc. Just like there is nothing more holy about having much, having expensive things, etc.

Where holiness exists in either of these is in being generous with whatever you have, being content in your current or any other situation God may have ordained for you, and treasuring Christ above any stuff or circumstances.

* The holy are generous:

Our Lord taught a very strong point we find in Mark 12.

Mark 12:41-44

Christ is saying clearly that our generosity must be sacrificial; that’s the complete opposite of seeking to be rich for the sake of selfishness. He’s calling for us to have a heart that longs to give generously and see it through.

Look at Paul’s charge in:

Ephesians 4:28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Don’t steal; that should be obvious. But look: he’s saying work hard, *so you have resources to be generous with.*

*Making a lot of money is not a sin; it’s where your heart is in the process and how you manage it.*

The holy are generous.

* The holy are content in current or any other situations God has ordained:

Matthew 6:25-34

God is in control of your circumstances, and He has a plan for each of His elect that is good. Based on these realties, there is no need for anxiety, and we are commanded to not be anxious; instead, we are to be content in the Lord.

* The holy treasure Christ above any stuff or circumstances:

Look carefully with me at this; *this is the foundation to all we are seeing tonight.*

Our foundation is in God because of the gospel that reconciled us to Him.

Job displayed contentment and treasuring God over circumstances or temporary things this way:

Job 23:12I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.

**The secret to true contentment is knowing we have the highest treasure, the sweetest gift, the eternal joy of Christ Jesus**.

The psalmist expresses this beautifully:

Psalm 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Philippians 4:14-18

God uses “means” as a way of carrying out His plan.

* **It’s All for God’s Glory**

Philippians 4:20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul’s rightfully reminding everyone what they need to hear, we need to hear, and he needs to hear: Everything should be and is for God’s glory.

* **Closing His Letter**

Philippians 1:1-5

Philippians 4:21-23 21Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. 22All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.**23**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Paul is very affectionate for these believers, and the believers around him are likewise. This is such a beautiful picture of Christian love and community even with those you don’t walk with daily. There is a real unity in Christ and His truths that goes well beyond simple cordialness. Paul cares for these people deeply and they him, enough for everyone to serve one another and support one another. Unity in truth is on display here.

* **Additional Application**

We must not ask things of God from the wrong heart.

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

The Lord Jesus modeled and taught that we must go to God in dependence with our requests.

**Matthew 6:11**“Give us this day our daily bread”

Let us take our requests to God, express our dependence on Him, and trust His plan for our lives. He will give us what we ask for when it aligns with His will, and yet, when the answer is “no” or “later,” we joyfully trust Him all the same.

True contentment: I have Christ forever, I have all I need. Whether I am “facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need,” “God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” Jesus is enough.