CAPITOL® COMMISSION
Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders

Contentment

May 7, 2024

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule
Tuesday, May 7, 7:00-7:45 AM
House Hearing Room 3
All Welcome!
Capitol Commission is NON-PARTISAN and NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Introduction

Paul dropped a load of biblical insight and knowledge to the Philippians. Most of all he showed up with Jesus in life and word. Phil. 4:10-23 is the culmination of his letter. He offers the Philippians a thank you message.

4:10 – How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me.

Once again, Paul uses language of partnership and care. One can think of the appreciation and gratitude Paul had for the Philippians for their care. From the time of Paul's departure to his time in a Roman prison, the church wanted to do more but 800 miles away and 2 months to travel made it difficult to traverse.

4:11 – Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.

Paul learned how to be resilient. In spite of the many challenges and difficulties Paul faced them all with a steadfast perspective and confidence in the Lord's faithfulness.

> *If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.* 2 Tim. 2:13

He is not lacking the essentials. God has been meeting his needs throughout his missionary journey whether in prison or free, whether physically beaten, almost to the point of death, whether people listened to his presentation of the gospel or rejected the good news message and the messenger. To persevere through all things was common among the Old Testament prophets. Throughout history, Paul was not alone in his persevering for God's purposes.

4:12 – I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

Paul learned contentment with the basics of life. He embraced simplicity. One reason people are hindered from continued peace is because of worry and anxiety.

The secret to contentment is total reliance on the sovereignty of God. Trust in God's sovereignty is not complacency. The end will make him abundantly rich, not in materials things, but in the presence of Jesus and all the promises of God.

Paul's perspective is thinking about the future of Christ's return. How you live now will affect your accountability before God at the time of reckoning.

Contentment is front center because of the confidence in the coming of Jesus. The Greeks, especially the ancient philosopher Aristotle, believed moderation was the way to live. He talked about the "golden mean", not living in extreme states. Paul did not subscribe to Aristotelian view of virtue, the "mean". Paul believed that whatever situation he found himself, he would trust in the all sufficiency of God. That is the message to the Philippians, and to you and me today.

> *For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.* Phil 4:13

Paul was not a self-made man. He didn't do it his way like Frank Sinatra. Not inner fortitude, a Tony Robinson seminar, a Zig Ziglar motivational speech, a cadre of self-help books can lead one to contentment.

He did it God's way: total surrender to the Lord, the all sufficient one. For this reason, many do not surrender their life to Christ and follow Him. Absolute surrender is counter intuitive; it's combative to the strong, self-made man. Human nature is to be in the driver's seat of one's life. Some might yield a few safe areas that aren't as significant to let go, but few will give it all up to follow Jesus.

Religious people can be syncretistic. They like to mix and match different religions and philosophies on their spiritual journey. They pick the parts that work for them.

However, the Jesus way is to lay it down so you can pick it up.

> *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?* Matt. 16:24-27

The only way to obtain contentment is to surrender to Jesus in full trust that He will take care of you better than you can take care of yourself. The Christ follower's joy is found when we are satisfied with what God gives us.

Paul did not come to this place of understanding overnight. He said he learned to be content. Paul's learning came from his lived experience that encountered some of the most difficult happenings one could face. To name a few, he was: beaten and whipped to the point of death, more than once; in-prisoned multiple times for no legitimate reason; forced out of towns and cities; rejected for proclaiming the message of the good news, Christ the King.

Of course, Paul was a part of many people being physically, spiritually, and mentally healed. He participated in the greatest miracle, a person committing to follow Jesus. Playing life safe does not bring contentment it produces complacency.

> *Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.* 1 Tim. 6:6

4:14-16 – Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty. As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. [16] Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once.

It may refer to an account that the Philippians used to send money to Paul when he was in need, from the time he started the Jesus community and beyond. This generous church was committed to partnership with Paul throughout his ministry to help ensure his financial provisions were supporting his calling to proclaim the gospel wherever God called him. A mutual love, loyalty, and grace-filled generosity marked their relationship.

> *The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.* Prov. 11:25

4:17-18 – I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness. At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God.

Gift refers to an increase in literal fruit. He wants them to receive back from God more than they gave. Paul is not asking for more, he is acknowledging their partnership with him as a missionary and with God who called them to live a generous life. Generosity is an act of worship to God.

4:19 – And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

Their generous gift was part of what God used to supply Paul's needs. Paul is saying just as God met my needs He will supply all your needs. Paul knew he could not pay back the Philippians, and he knew God could and would be their supply. God's resources are limit less.

4:20 – Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.

Paul closes out His letter with a doxology. A doxology is an expression of praise to God.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (Bishop Thomas Ken)

God is sovereign. All glory, honor, power, belongs to Him. All we have comes from Him all we have we give to Him.

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Eph. 1:3

Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. Eph. 3:21

4:21-23 – Give my greetings to each of God's holy people—all who belong to Christ Jesus.

Thank You!

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The brothers who are with me send you their greetings. And all the rest of God's people send you greetings, too, especially those in Caesar's household. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Paul's ministry team, believers in Rome, the Roman prisoners, the Roman guards, the servants and leaders in Caesar's home could each be among the one's offering the greeting. This greeting provides encouragement and hope that Paul and his missionary work to advance the Kingdom of God were on the move forward.

To share was to fellowship with Paul while he was in prison and such.