

Philippians - Part 8

The Secret to Being Content

Philippians 4:10-23

Memory Verses: Philippians 4:13, 19

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

We've been looking at the book of Philippians for 7 weeks. This makes the 8th and final week we will be looking at this short letter to the church at Philippi. And what is the main theme of this book church? Joy. 13 times in these short 4 chapters, Paul tells this church to have joy or rejoice. And why is Paul concerned for their joy? Because most people run after happiness, and happiness is good, but it is temporary. Find joy and you will remain happy regardless of your circumstances. It's that simple... find joy and you will find life long, soul sustaining happiness within.

How do we find this joy? In Christ. Jesus Christ is the only thing that humanity can place their trust in to sustain them through the hardships of this life. So we find joy by investing in our relationship with Christ. This book shows us 8 ways to find joy by investing in Christ and his church. Serving in ministry, fighting for the faith, being unified in humility, shining your light so that you can't be ignored, exchanging your resume for Christ's, running after the prize, standing firm while running, and today... learning contentment.

Contentment is the idea that you are good to go. That no matter what is going on in your life you are set. It's interesting though when you look at people who should be content... that they are still chasing for more. A study produced from the [journal Nature Human Behavior](#) found that a higher income “tended to be associated with reduced life satisfaction and a lower level of well-being.” They gave three main reasons for their findings. 1) the more money you have, the more wants you have. At some point they only things you don't have are the things that cost the most. Life becomes a pursuit of the bigger and better. 2) the more money you have, the more isolated you are. For some reason, the richer you get the smaller your circle of friends gets. Rich people only want to associate with other rich people, and let's face it... there's a lot less rich people than there are poor people. 3) the more money you have, the more you work. It takes a lot of work to stay rich and keep climbing that ladder. The richest people are the worst workaholics. More wants, less friends, longer hours... not the recipe for sustained happiness; who would've thought huh?

Yes, circumstances can make us unsatisfied, but abundance can also make us feel unsatisfied too. Why? Cause we are naturally dis-

content. We don't naturally find joy in all circumstances... if fact we naturally want more, better, best... and we will be dis-satisfied until we get it... and then when we get it... we want something else. You say, if only my life was _____ or if only I had _____ i'd be happy. The problem is that when you get there... you still ain't satisfied. Cause, in this flesh, in this sin filled world, we are looking for satisfaction in all the wrong places instead of the only thing that can truly fill the hole inside our heart.

For example, take me and **hats**. Im a collector. And I love hats. So I started with a few... but I wasn't satisfied. So I kept on buying more and more. Now I got a lot... but guess what.. I'm probably gonna buy more... cause I'm not content. What's your hat collection? What's that thing in your life that no matter how much you got... you just want more? We all struggle huh? But we need to find contentment right?

So how do we find contentment? Let's read **Philippians 4:10-23**. **Paul just keeps rejoicing no matter what doesn't he? And, the reason he can rejoice in such distressing circumstances is that he has discovered the secret of rejoicing in all circumstances. That is the discovery of a wholly adequate God. This is the secret of the apostle Paul, and it is the secret of every victorious Christian. Every one who has learned to live above his circumstances has learned to reckon upon the fact that the scriptures state from cover to cover that the Lord Jesus Christ is the indwelling life within us who is wholly adequate and competent to meet every possibility that can come our way. When we start believing that we will find life begins to change, and the whole of our attitude and expression begins to alter.**

And so we see here that the secret to contentment boils down to answering two questions. The first, how to be satisfied in any circumstance? The second, how to be supplied in every need?” And when we answer these two questions we will find this... **When Christ is All You Got, Christ is All You Need.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

So let's answer the first question first. How can we be satisfied in any circumstance? **The Strength of Christ Satisfies in all Circumstances (vs10-13)**. The first thing we see here in **verse 10** is that the church at Philippi had recently “revived their concern” for Paul. This most likely meant that the church had reengaged in their efforts to support Paul through financial giving, prayer support, and a strategic missions focus. We put a huge emphasis on strategic missions here at Stone Creek as it is one of our 6 core values. We believe that we should support our missionaries financially, but also with prayer support, encouragement, and service with their ministry.

Paul says, that there wasn't much of an opportunity to for the church at Philippi to partner with him up to this point but now the opportunity is wide open. God has opened the doors of opportunity for partnership and closed

others. When the doors are open we will give, go, and grow with our missionaries. When the doors are closed we will find creative solutions or go in other directions. Regardless, when it comes to who we partner with in strategic missions we always abide by this motto; find out where God is working and join him there. I want you to go ahead and start praying over our strategic missions and where God may be working and calling us to work with him in the future.

Then Paul says, regardless of those who can support me now, I have learned to be content in any situation. As a missionary, if he has a lot of support he can find contentment and if he has little support he can find contentment. **Right now we support 4 missionary families and 4 local missions agencies as part of our strategic missions focus. The 4 missionary families are Ed & Karen Lyttle in Norway House, Canada, Harold & Becky Porterfield, in Turkey, Jim & Sterling O'Neil with Frontier Ventures, who will be with us on September 27th, and Josh & Trisha Dickinson in Senegal. The 4 local missions agencies are the Claire Parker Foundation, Transition Pregnancy Solutions, SBC of Virginia, and Good News Jail & Prison Ministry. Today we are blessed to have David Abernathy with us, our Chaplain for this ministry in the Danville area.** For the next few minutes I want David to share with us what God has been doing through his ministry this last year and how he has found contentment in spite of the circumstances this year. **David Abernathy.**

Contentment isn't normal. David has learned how to be content... and Paul says in **verse 11** that "I've learned to be content." If he had to learn to be content, that means that contentment isn't natural. We are innately dis-content as humans. We discussed this just a few minutes ago. Where does our discontentment come from? It stems from the curse of sin and our desire to have more. You see, God's original plan was for us to be content... and in Genesis 1 we were.... but when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and the curse was put on all of humanity our nature was changed. We went from loving people and using things to using people and loving things. We went from being okay with our situation to constantly trying to get more stuff or a better situation.

So Paul learned how to beat our natural inclination. But, Paul isn't just expressing to us how to learn to be content... he's telling us what the real definition of contentment is. As we've discussed already, some say true contentment is having everything everything you want, but that's not true. Some have all they want and it's not enough. Paul learned that the definition of **true contentment is wanting only what you have.**

Meaning... he learned to play the **card's** he was dealt. You ever play cards? Sometimes you have a really bad hand, sometimes you have a really good hand... but it's not about the cards really, but how you play them by bluffing or by holding back. Paul knew that he could find contentment with a good hand or a bad hand... because Jesus is the one

who dealt them to him.

And when we play the cards we are dealt we see that good hands and bad hands both present problems. Paul says that it's the same way with abundance & poverty. Look at **verse 12**. I could get dis-content with plenty. I could get dis-content in need. But in both of these, I've learned to be content. As we discussed earlier, wealthy people have very specific struggles and suffer depression in a higher percentage than poor people. When we have more we can't learn how to be satisfied with less. Poor people, on the other hand, know how to be satisfied with less, because they have to, and therefore they have more joy. And don't get me wrong here, we aren't saying that being poor doesn't have it's problems either... I guarantee someone who is starving is not in a better position than someone who is eating steak and lobster. What I'm saying is, both present problems and both are for our benefit. God has given you your circumstance so that you can be transformed into the image of Christ through it. Here's the truth of the matter; **God isn't as interested in what happens to you as he is in how you handle it.**

So how do we handle it? By putting our faith in the strength of Christ to strengthen us **vs13**. Look, Why do we say "I can't?" Could it be that unknowingly we actually think everything that happens in this world should be to our benefit – what we truly want is for God to arrange everything in the universe to suit our personal desires, and when that doesn't happen we get upset because things aren't working out the way we want them to... and so we say, "i just can't, or in today's vernacular, "i can't even." Have we forgotten that we aren't our own, but we've been bought by God and now we are his... and what he wants goes, and the cards he deals us is the hand he wants us to play? The truth is **we say we can't but what we really mean is we don't want to**. **We don't want to play those cards, we don't want to live out this scenario. God, I know you want me to grow through this circumstance, but I'd rather not if its all the same. I don't know about yall, but I'm so sick of living in a world of I can't. Every day we hear things like, I can't stand so and so, or I can't live like this anymore, or I can't work this job anymore, or I can't make it to church, or I can't teach my kids at home, and on an on.**

But, how good is it to find someone who says they can? Paul says I can. I can live the life that God has given me. I can play the cards he's dealt me. I can do whatever he has called me to do. I can find satisfaction in undesirable circumstances. Why? Cause I want to? Not necessarily. But because I know the strength of Christ will strengthen me to do it. I can because Christ can. I can because if Christ wants me to walk through it he'll give me the strength to do it. No matter your situation we must recognize that Christ is the one who gave it to you... and he'll give you the strength to overcome it. So, yes, I can do all things through him who gives me strength. I can be content in all situations because he gives me strength. The bottom

line is this... in all your situations whether in abundance or in need... Christ is the only one who can satisfy you fully. How can I be satisfied in any situations? Christ. Christ is all you got. And... **When Christ is All You Got, Christ is All You Need.**

Now, let's address the second question. How can I be supplied in every need? Get this... **The Body of Christ Supplies in any Need (vs14-23)**. The body of Christ, the church, is an extension of Jesus Christ. This is the way that Christ physically touches the world... through his hands and feet in the church. Paul knows that he doesn't have to worry about being in need because the church is going to take care of him... and they do in **verses 14-18**. He says he has received the full payment and more... meaning... the church has supplied his need and then some. In verses 10-13 it appears Paul is in need, verses 14-20 make it clear that his needs have been met by Christ... in the form of the church body.

And get this, Paul suggests in **verse 17**, that he isn't as interested in having his needs met as he is in the church's fruit being increased. This goes all the way back to the beginning of the letter where we see that **real joy comes not from getting but giving**. Their ministry is a source of satisfaction and joy... because they have given instead of gotten they are more content.

It is the job of the church to supply the needs of those in the church and those who do ministry in the name of the church. So here at Stone Creek Church, we take care of our staff, we take care of our missionaries, we take care of our widows and orphans, and we take care of our hurting and needy. **When those in need reach out to Christ, the church must answer the call.**

The whole point is this... **verse 19**; our God will supply our every need. How? Through the church or through the supernatural strength of Christ. Why? Cause he can. Cause, according to **verse 20**, he has immeasurable riches and glory. Why can he meet all your needs... cause he's the only one who has everything that you need. Where will he meet these needs? Look at **verses 21-22**. To every saint. No one will be left out of God's blessings.

So, if the church is the body of Christ, then all we really have is Christ in us and the church with us. So, all we really have is Christ to supply our every need. And, **When Christ is All You Got, Christ is All You Need**

Application

The secret to being content, to finding satisfaction in every circumstance, to rejoicing in all situations is simple – It's Jesus Christ. He is your strength. When you can't in yourself, you can in his strength. Play the cards you've been dealt for his glory.

The church is your supplier. When you are in need, the body of Christ is here for you. No need to worry or fret, if you have a local church, you are never alone. In his strength and through the church, my God will supply your every need according to his riches in glory. If you find your strength in Christ... and you find supply in the body of Christ, the church, you will find contentment in Christ. **When Christ is All You Got, Christ is All You Need**

Conclusion

The book of Philippians closes in **vs4:23** with this... The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. If the whole book is about finding joy regardless of the circumstances you face then the last verse is the means by which we accomplish this. The way to rejoice in every circumstance is... put your faith in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, his grace will inhabit your spirit.

Listen, I don't know where you are with Christ today... but if you do not have joy... you don't have Christ. How do you get Christ? By simply asking him to be your Lord, repenting of your sin, and putting your faith in him as your savior and Lord. Then he will put his grace in your spirit and you will be saved and find life sustaining, everlasting joy. **When Christ is All You Got, Christ is All You Need**