

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE -

11.19.2023

# GRATITUDE BY TRUE CONTENTMENT

## I. CONTENTMENT IS NOT SITUATIONAL

- **Philippians 4:10–13** [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. [11] Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. [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. (ESV)
- Paul writes these words while under house arrest in Rome. And of course as we see throughout Philippians, He's rejoicing.
- In this case, he's rejoicing because the church in Philippi took up a collection to help pay for his housing and expenses and they sent Epaphroditus to bring him the gift and here he is expressing gratefulness that God is meeting his needs through the Philippian believers again at this time.
- It's been years since their last gift, but God has revived their concern for him, like a plant that sat dormant all winter and is now blooming again in the spring.
- The fact is though, regardless of whether they sent him a gift or not, Paul is content.
- He has needs, of course, but he doesn't consider himself to be in need (11).
- *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.*
- How many of us can say that?
- Think about Paul and the situations he's been in as he writes in whatever situation I am, I am content:
  - He experienced being shipwrecked.
  - He was beaten and thrown out of cities; jailed on numerous occasions.
  - He didn't work a high paying job; at Corinth he worked making tents.
  - And know he's been chained to a Roman guard for 2 years.
  - And yet if Paul was discontent in any of these situations, it would mean he'd rather be someplace other than where God put him.
  - However, Paul is content in whatever situation God places him!
  - Have you ever wished for different circumstances?
  - We all have at various times. And we can be encouraged to follow Paul's example of contentment in any situation we face.

## II. CONTENTMENT IS LEARNED

- Paul says he has learned to be content in any situation!
- In fact he says it twice for good measure!
- Contentment doesn't come naturally. It didn't come naturally to Paul. He had to learn it.
- He learned this from being a disciple of Jesus.
- He learned this through experiences of abundance and need and learning in those experiences that Christ was sufficient.
- In every time of need. In every situation, having Christ was enough.
- That's true contentment. Recognizing the providential hand of God in our lives, in every situation, and the peace we experience no matter the ups and downs of life, because the one thing that will never change is the all-sufficiency of Christ!
- There is nothing lacking when we have Christ!
- John 10:10 I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly!
- Like Paul, we need to learn this. Rarely are we thankful for the difficult situations we're in, so how do we learn this?
- Jesus exemplified contentment in every situation.
- Paul can be content because the all-sufficiency of Jesus was sufficient for every situation in his life.
- And his sufficiency is enough for us too. He is enough.
- Paul knew Jesus was enough. Paul understood the secret to facing every situation.
- It's a secret because it doesn't come naturally to us. You don't know the secret until you've experienced Christ's all sufficiency in every situation.
- William Hendriksen in his commentary on Philippians writes: *"To those that fear Him, God reveals this mystery (Psalm 25:14). Those who reject Christ cannot understand how it is possible for a Christian to remain calm in adversity, humble in prosperity."*
- What is this secret mystery? "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"
- Paul doesn't say I may or might do all things, which would imply permission, he says I CAN do all things which means we have the ABILITY to do all things through him who strengthens us.
- I can "DO all things", refers to power or strength. Paul says he possesses the strength to do all things.
- All things of course are all things that are in the will of God. Things that glorify God.
- And it's all through Christ. John 15:5 Jesus says "Apart from me you can do nothing"
- This strength is not superficial. It's by the work of the Holy Spirit in the deepest parts of our hearts changing us, teaching us to rely on the strength of the Lord, conforming our wills to His, and enabling us to find contentment in knowing Christ whether we're in times of abundance or need.

## III. CONTENTMENT IS NOT ANXIOUSNESS

- The opposite of contentment is discontentment, anxiousness, and worry.
- **Matthew 6:25–33** [25] "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? [26] Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [27] And which of you by being anxious can add

a single hour to his span of life? [28] And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, [29] yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [30] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? [31] Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' [32] For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. [33] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

- If you've been anxious, if you've been worried, if you've got a burden on your mind about how things are going to work out, if you're worried about your health, or your job, Jesus has a kind word for you here: "Do not be anxious."
- If God in his goodness provides for birds and flowers, he's going to provide for you too. He knows your needs.
- The difference maker isn't God's provision, it's our perspective.
- There's a perspective that the anxious have, verse 31 - What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? The world seeks after these things.
- Look at the four questions Jesus asks:
  - God feeds the birds - aren't you of more value than they?
  - Can you add an hour to your lifespan by being anxious?
  - Why are you anxious about clothes? Even the flowers are clothed in beautiful petals.
  - And finally - If God clothes the plants which come and go, don't you think he'll clothe you?
- Don't you think he'll take care of you? He will!
- There's another perspective we must have, a contented perspective based on faith and trust in a good Father that knows our needs. And we gain this perspective when we raise our eyes from being focused on the earthly things to being focused on the heavenly ones.
- Vs 33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
- Find contentment in him, in pursuing him and not the earthly things our world chases after.
- We are citizens of God's kingdom, sons and daughters of a good Father that delights in us, knows our each and every need, and is powerful to provide. Seek after Him!
- And you will find rest. You will find the anxiousness and worry about these things gone when seeking him first.
- Being content with the essentials doesn't mean we need to live as destitute minimalists.
- Food, shelter and clothing are not the upper limits of what a Christian should have. We should enjoy any good gifts we receive from him above and beyond those things.
- There isn't a call here to a life of abstinence from anything beyond the essentials, but we are to be content with just the essentials.
- We are to be content knowing that our provision comes from God and not from us chasing after material things.
- Our understanding of God's provision should impact our spending, and our approach to material possessions.
- Job 1:21 "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."
- Can you say that?
- This material world is temporary. Our possessions are temporary.
- So where do we put our focus? Seek first the kingdom of God.
- Matthew 6 verses 19–21: [19] "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, [20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither

moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (ESV)

- When we trust in God's provision and we're not worrying or being anxious about material things, when we seek God first and his kingdom, when our treasure is in heaven, that's a contented place to be.

## IV. CONTENTMENT IS LINKED WITH GODLINESS

- **1 Timothy 6:6–10** [6] But 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. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. (ESV)
  - There is gain to be had from godliness, but when it's mixed with contentment.
  - Godly living, growing in Christ, those things bring great spiritual gain.
  - **1 Timothy 4:7b–8** [7] ... Rather train yourself for godliness; [8] for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. (ESV)
  - Exercise and bodily training he says have some value. Godliness, godly living, is of value in EVERY way.
  - Godliness is a spiritual gain, provided you are content with what you have and not looking for material gain.
  - Why is that?
  - Verse 7 - We can't gain and hold onto anything in this material world! *For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.*
  - **John 14:2** [2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (ESV)
  - We can be content because our contentment isn't found in the material things. It isn't based on what situation we're in at the moment. It's based on Christ. It's based on trusting in the provision of a good Father, and giving over control of situations, outcomes, needs, to him as we lift them up in prayer.
  - The flip side of this trusting perspective is the desire to accumulate material things; the desire to be rich.
  - [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. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.
  - It's impossible to truly be content when your desire and focus is on money, wealth, and accumulating it in the here and now.
  - Have you allowed riches and material things to become unhealthy desires?

## V. CONTENTMENT IS NOT COMPLACENCY

- Not all contentment is healthy contentment, especially when contentment turns into complacency.
- We shouldn't be content with sin in our lives!
- **Romans 6:1–2** [1] What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [2] By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? (ESV)

- **Romans 6:12** [12] Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (ESV)
- Paul wasn't at all content with sin. Romans 7:24 [24] Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (ESV)
- **Romans 8:1–2** [1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. (ESV)
- Don't be content with sin. Don't become complacent in the ongoing war against it.
- We are also not to get complacent in our walk with Christ.
- Paul certainly wasn't content with his walk with Christ.
- **Philippians 3:12–14** Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- He hasn't arrived yet in terms of the Christian life. But it's his goal, his pursuit in life, and he has a healthy discontent which prevents complacency.
- Look at his perspective here: Christ made me his own so I will make him my own.
- He's responding to Christ making him his own by an all out effort of his life to pursue, to follow after Christ.
- Do our lives reflect a proportional response? Christ gave us his all, do we give him our all?
- Paul has a healthy discontent, there's more to be found in Christ!
- So what does he do? He forgets what lies behind him, and he strains forward to what lies ahead.
- Paul has a goal. He is in pursuit of knowing Christ completely, being like Christ completely.
- Goals are indicators that you're not content.
- The christian life isn't complacent. It's pressing towards Christ, not to earn our salvation, but to know him more and more, to be like him more and more, making this our goal, and at the finish line when we are given the prize we will hear "well done good and faithful servant."

## VI. CONTENTMENT IS FOUND IN CHRIST

- As we press towards Christ, we will not be disappointed with what we find.
- True, lasting contentment is found in Christ! It's found in him and him alone.
- He is the one that satisfies our hearts! In Him are endless blessings, spiritual riches, and an incorruptible inheritance. In him we find mercy and grace and peace and experience endless joy!
- If our eyes are trained on him, and not the material things, if we live our lives pressing into him, we will find true, sweet, enduring contentment.
- **Ephesians 1:3–14** [3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the

fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. [11] In him 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, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (ESV)

- God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places! How could we ever be discontent with that?
- God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. You are chosen by God! And he did that way before anything even existed! And all on account of Christ! We should be beyond content with that!
- In love he determined that he would adopt us as spiritual sons and daughters.
- When you're tempted to be discontent about a situation, remember: you are a son, you are a daughter of God the Father.
- In Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. The payment for and the forgiveness of all our trespasses. That payment, that cost was far greater than we could ever pay.
- And when the Father sees us, redeemed by the blood of his Son, he is content with the penalty paid on our behalf. He is content with the finished work of Christ, his wrath against our sin fully and completely satisfied, and now we have forgiveness, according to the riches of his grace.
- Verse 11: In Christ we've obtained an inheritance. There is an inheritance awaiting us in glory!
- His inheritance is a far better one than we could ever hope to receive here on earth.
- We can be content with whatever possessions we have, with food and water and shelter and clothes, because we know there is a rich inheritance awaiting us.
- And In Christ we've been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Those he chose before the foundations of the world, those he predestined for adoption as sons and daughters of God, when we heard the word of truth, the gospel, and our eyes were opened and we believed in Him, at that moment, the Holy Spirit put his seal, His mark on us.
- We are his, forever, the Holy Spirit giving us full assurance that the inheritance awaits us, it is guaranteed! It will be there until that day when we enter his presence and see Christ face to face, and we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory!

## CONCLUSION

- So where does your contentment lie?
- Are there situations where you've struggled in being content in, or have failed to be content, looking to the physical things to satisfy?
- Do you need to recognize that true contentment is not based on our situations but true contentment is learned through them as we experience the all-sufficiency of Christ for every situation?
- Have you been anxious or worried instead of having a contented trust in the one who upholds all things by his great power?
- Do we desire the spiritual gain to be had from godliness - when it is mixed with contentment?
- Are you complacent and content in areas you shouldn't be, in your sin, in your marriage, settling into comfort and ease in your manner of living, instead of pressing into Christ as your all-in-all?
- May you be encouraged and grateful to be reminded that true, lasting contentment is found in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?