

2014 October 12
Pastor Brian Bluett

Philippians – The Blueprint for Joy #14

Welcome to OIC. We are glad you are here. If you know nothing about our church, I want to tell you this. We make every effort to be Christ centered and Bible based. We strive to be a church where you are loved and where you can experience God's love. This week we are continuing our study of the letter that Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. The entire letter flows from Paul's desire to let the Philippians know his joy comes from a relationship with Jesus. Paul had started the church and now he is responding to a letter that Epaphroditus had brought with him from the Philippians. I wonder if we can put in perspective how difficult the trip was for Epaphroditus. I google mapped this trip and I found it would take 44 days to walk there from Philippi to Rome. So the church at Philippi really wanted Paul to know that their love for him was a reciprocal thing. They knew that Paul loved them. Our Scripture text today is Philippians 4:10-14

Philippians 4:10-14

¹⁰But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity.

¹¹Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

¹³I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

Paul addresses the gift he had received from the church. Basically Paul was thankful for the gift, not so much because he needed anything but because he knew that they cared for him. It's sort of like when you receive a gift from your child. You may not have been in need of it and it may have no practical value, yet you appreciate it for the thought behind it. Today I will show you 3 simple truths about contentment. Let me define what the Bible means by contentment. "CONTENTMENT IS A STATE OF SATISFACTION THAT IS ANCHORED TO OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD THAT RESULTS IN A JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF LIFE." Let's look today at 3 simple truths that will help us understand contentment.

Simple truth #1 – Contentment is learned.

Philippians 4:10,11

¹⁰But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity.

¹¹Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

Contentment is not something that comes naturally. We are prone to compare ourselves to others or always want more than we have (Adam and Eve) or we just tend to complain a lot. You don't have to be taught those things. We don't "do" something to be content. We must "learn" some things in order to be content. One of the things we must learn is to have a new perspective on life. We have eternal life now. So why get all bent out of shape about something when our lives are only a vapor?

James 4:14

¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Also, we must learn a new attitude. And that is an attitude that does not include complacency. Complacency is when nothing bothers you. That's not contentment. I also think contentment comes from a deepened faith and that takes time to develop. You have to have experienced some life so that you have something to compare each of your life experiences to. Nancy and I support an orphan boy in Haiti. He's about 10 years old. Last Christmas we gave him a version of the Samaritan's Purse shoebox. We were sent a picture of him as he opened it. You would have thought he had received a million dollar gift but it was really just a few odds and end toiletries – a pencil and a pen, but you see, he had nothing to compare it with.

Simple truth #2 Contentment is not about possessions or circumstances

Philippians 4:12

¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

There was a king who was discontented. In fact, he was so anxious he couldn't sleep, rest or think. He called his wise men and asked them for advice. One very old and very wise man said "find a man in your kingdom who is content. Then wear his shirt for one day and one night and you will have contentment". Days and weeks went by. Finally, the wise men returned. Well, said the king, did you find a contented man? Yes, sir, we have found such a man. Well, where is his shirt? Your majesty, he didn't own a shirt. Let me support that further.

I Timothy 6:6

⁶But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment

It is difficult to be content when life is not going your way. Amazingly, the same truth holds true for a lack of contentment in times of plenty. We begin to believe we are happy because we have "stuff". Be careful when you are going through the good times that you are not looking down upon others. We have probably experienced those times when people have looked down upon us. Remember, you reap what you sow.

Galatians 6:7

⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Simple truth #3 – Contentment comes from learning to appreciate what you have in Christ

Philippians 4:13,14

¹³I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

I'll say it again. Our contentment is anchored in our relationship with Christ. Can I give you quickly 3 things that I appreciate about my personal relationship with Jesus? This is a two minute message within this message. First, I appreciate His grace. No matter what the circumstances are, I know I'm getting more than I deserve. I deserve eternal punishment but I have eternal life. Secondly, I appreciate His promises. I have a place in heaven. Jesus will never leave me nor forsake me. He is the provider of all my needs (Jehovah Jireh). He will guide me in the truth. Thirdly, I have a friend in Jesus.

John 15:15

¹⁵No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Conclusion

Let me give you some final suggestions for finding and maintaining your contentment. Here they are. First; stay completely in the present. Too many times in our lives we lose our joy by dragging the past around with us, or forecasting difficulty in the future. There's a medical term for it – GAD – Generalized Anxiety Disorder. In other words, you forecast problems with any upcoming scenario in your life.

Matthew 6:34

³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Secondly, remember that material things are given as tools, and not just for our pleasure. To whom much is given, much is expected. Let me back that up with Scripture.

Luke 12:48b

From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

Let me conclude by saying this. There's only one road that leads to contentment. And that is Jesus.