

Phil. 4

I have entitled today's message, "Learning Contentment".

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

Phil. 4:10-13

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

In the midst of all of this sharing/funding between Paul and the Philippian Church, there is a message/lesson on contentment.

Vs. 11 Contentment is a real lesson of life and a needed one.

Every believer needs to be content.

#1 Contentment must be learned.

Sometimes never learned.

It is not an endowment given at birth.

It is not natural to us.

Contentment does not arrive by chance;

it is not purchased;

it springeth not up of itself,

Paul had learned to be content and we can learn to be content.

Contentment is commanded and it is a sin not to be content.

Those things that are opposite of contentment are discontentment, covetousness, and complaining.

They are as natural to man as weeds are to the garden.

We do not need to sow weeds; they come up naturally enough.

We don't need to teach people to complain; they complain fast enough.

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without murmurings/complaining and griping/bellyaching

The Bible teaches us how contentment is obtained.

The Bible teaches us how contentment is produced;

Contentment is obtained thru experience, thru the processes of life.

Learning thru experience.

It is a product of discipline—'I have learned.'

#2 what is contentment? Vs. 12

I KNOW HOW.

Know how.

Contention, contentious = strife, struggle

Contentment, on the other hand, is to be satisfied, quiet, at rest, at peace.

Not trying to be somewhere else or to be someone else.

Being happy with the way things are currently.

Being settled and joyful in the current situation.

Hebrews 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have:*

That was what Jesus was teaching in Matt. 6

See that in vs. 11

Whatever state,
condition or predicament I am in,

The inner man/person is in a state of contentment...not disturbed, state of resting

Vs. 12

When I am full or when I am hungry, in blessings and in sufferings,

I can be content.

How is contentment produced in me?

By my learning how to respond to the situations of life.

By thinking right vs. 8

By having and experiencing the peace of God vs. 7

By prayer vs. 6

By rejoicing vs. 4

Paul was not exalted by abundance, nor crushed by need.

Vs. 12 –

How to abase

How to live on the bottom.

How to live without

How to abound.

How to live on top.

How to live with extra

To be content with little,

To be content with abundance.

BOTH are tough!

Everywhere, whether in prison or free

In everything, whether hungry or full, suffering or living large.

Contentment is difficult to obtain and it is difficult to keep.

With abundance, we think too highly of ourselves. **Romans 12:3**

With abundance, we forget who gives us the power to gain and to get. **Deut. 8:18**

And we begin to trust in our uncertain riches. **I Timothy 6:17**

It is hard to carry a full cup with a steady hand.

Cup with M & M's,

Learn to enjoy the M & M's in our cup Whether they be few or many

The Mindset is to tear down good barns and Build bigger barns.

Construction or housing shows on television.

Look at the home and say, I cannot live with that, that has to change, we must destroy this

Prosperity wants to puff up the mind beyond measure, and adversity, on the other hand, to depress the mind.

Paul had experienced both ways of living, i.e. poor, hungry, suffering, and in need;

And prosperity, filled, blessings, and abundance.

How did he do this? He kept his mind on the right stuff and his actions were in line with his thinking.

It requires as much grace to keep the heart right in prosperity as it does in adversity.

We have learned contentment with abundance when:

We set a right value upon the things of the world, and neither prize them too high nor too low:

when we can avoid the temptations which accompany abundance;

when we can part with the abundance at the call, obedience and command of God; suffer financially for Christ

When we can make decisions that don't help the bottom line

when we attend more to our Christian duties, than to the sensual pleasures, laziness and satisfactions of abundance.

We have learned contentment with need:

When we suffer and our spirit does not sink or faint in the day of adversity:

When we are humbled and afflicted and we are patient and do not complain,

When we are low and without a sourness of spirit;

This is how to handle being abased.

It is wrong to complain about my situation;

And a spirit of impatience does no good, remedies nothing, and supplies nothing;

that God is teaching me, That God can provide in a way which I could not foresee, and that the Lord is able abundantly to sustain me.

A contented spirit is rare.

1 Timothy 6:6 godliness with contentment is great gain.

1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Whether not enough money or too much money,

In whatever condition I find myself, I am satisfied with it.

You take a first generation wealthy man, who worked his way up from nothing.

Then give that wealth to the kids and grandkids.

And those children will have a difficult time being content.

Why? They have never suffered or known hardship so it is difficult for them to appreciate what they have.

They have no measuring in their life. Nothing to measure against.

It is really a good thing to come from a rough background.

I am thankful for a tough raising, in an alcoholic home never knowing what a day may bring forth.

It has helped me with contentment.

I know what it's like to eat the same food for breakfast, live on little and to live without.

I know what it's like to be poor.

Something about it toughens you and you know you can live that way again if you have too.

You don't want too but you could if you had too.

It certainly helps to have a hard upbringing so when times get tough you do have some experience with it.

My great grandparents lived thru the depression, they always talked about hard times. They saved and they kept things because they never knew when they might need them.

Today's young people are better off financially and live with a lot more than previous generations.

Hard times for them is when the Wifi is not working or they have no cell service.

Most have cell phones – discontent

Yet they complain easily; their endurance is short. They quit quickly and have a difficulty not complaining.

I had a young man as my interpreter, city man, privileged and we were with the country folk of China.

Day 1 There was no A/C in the classroom.

He complained about the heat. Brother, you slept in A/C last night, none of the students had that.

I was not content as a young person.

I hated being poor. I was ashamed of my shoes, clothing, backwardness, being on welfare, parents.

Then I worked jobs to change that.

Later I became ashamed at who I had become...

Somebody that I was not, fake, wasteful, vain, proud

I remember the day I repented of that. It was December

I look at my upbringing now and I am thankful.

It has served me well.

Contentment means I can live with it. Might not like it, want it but I can live with it.

I will not drown in it.

It will not dominate my life.

I will have a joyful and free spirit.

I know whatever God determines is best; and therefore I am contented.

How I look – add height,

Who I am –

Where I am at – jobs shingling roofs, bagging groceries, running jack hammers,
whatever the job - did not quit

If we want corn, we must sow;

If we want a flower garden, we must have the gardener's care.

And if we are to be content, it must be cultivated.

It will not grow in us by nature;

The new nature can produce it, and even then we must be especially careful and watchful that we maintain and cultivate it.

Good church, pastor, friends, spouse, parents can help us with contentment.

Paul says, "I have *learned* . . . to be content;"

That means in the past, he wasn't.

He did not know how at one time.

Only a practicing striving Christian can learn to be content and continue to maintain contentment.

Once we have it, does not mean we will keep it.

Contentment is a hard thing to learn.

The only possible way to experience contentment is through Christ.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Jesus Christ enables us to be content.

Vs. 13 – No matter how difficult the struggles may have been, Paul had spiritual strength that came from Jesus Christ.

"I can do all things."

This verse does not mean that we can ***"Flash the lightning, or make the sun stand still."***

This verse means that I have the ability, I am able to . . . BE CONTENT!

This verse must be taken in context of being content.

I have the ability to be content in any situation including death, Phil. 1:21, II Tim. 4:6 because Christ enables me to.

Never let anyone, anyplace or anything dictate our attitude, we can be content because Christ said we could!

Paul's in jail and he writes this letter of joy.

How can he? Because Christ is strengthening Him.

We can live in extremes; and we are capable of being content in them all.

A living Christ on the inside is more than sufficient to endure the circumstances on the outside.

Let us stand for closing invitation

Are we content or coveting?

Are we content or complaining

Gospel