

Sermon Outline for FBC Feb.24th, 2019

Be Content in all Things

Philippians 4:10-23

Good morning!

Today my message is entitled "Be Content in all Things!"

As we finish our look at the book of Philippians, we see that not only are we to live with joy in all our circumstances, we are to be content in those circumstances as well. Paul clearly tells the church in Philippi to look at how Christ lived and do likewise.

Philippians 4:10-23

10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

Back in Paul's time, there were no phones, telegraph or internet. News traveled on the ground, so it took a long time to hear what is happening to someone far away.

The church in Philippi would have had long periods where news of Paul would not be available. They had been so very supportive of his ministry in sharing the Gospel with the Gentiles and wanted to continue.

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

What does it mean to be content?

Webster's Dictionary says content means "satisfied and willing; assenting" ¹

Benjamin Franklin said, "Content makes poor men rich. Discontent makes rich men poor." ²

An old saying puts it this way, "True contentment is found, not in having everything you want, but in not wanting to have everything." ³

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Lawrence Richards thinks Paul's secret is "It is to present his requests to God with thanksgiving – and then stop worrying about his circumstances." ⁴

I found a story about a fisherman in Nelson's Book of Stories that shows what being content really is.

"Once a rich industrialist, disturbed to find a fisherman sitting idly by his boat, asked, "Why aren't you out there fishing?" "Because I've caught enough fish for today," was the reply. "Why don't you catch more fish than you need?" asked the rich man.

"What would I do with them?"

"You could earn more money and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you'd have a fleet of boats and be rich like me."

"Then what would I do?" asked the fisherman.

"You could sit down and enjoy life."

“What do you think I’m doing now?” the fisherman replied.⁵

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

In my Student Bible there is a note on this verse: “Shipwrecked, beaten, imprisoned, Paul had seen the down side of life. He had also known prosperity. Both, he suggests, offer temptations. But Paul had discovered a secret for contentment in all situations: his deeply personal sense of living in Christ. In this he found strength to handle anything.”⁶

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NIV

9 But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.

Lawrence Richards gives us a thought on the early Christian Church’s giving:

“The New Testament assumes a stewardship based on God’s ownership of all we have and are. There is no “rent” to pay, no temple or priesthood to support. As Christians become aware of needs – whether globally or locally – they are to give out of love.”⁷

2 Corinthians 8:3-5 NIV

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints (Lord’s people).

5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to us in keeping with God’s will.

2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV

7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.

Halley’s Bible Handbook tells it like this: “This lesson holds for us, in our missionary offerings, of the modern world. Each offering, just a mite of an offering, does not amount to much. But even as the tiny raindrops that fall all over the central part of the North American continent make possible the torrent that rolls over Niagara Falls, so these mites of offerings from hundreds of thousands of Christians all over the land together constitute the stream of funds which is supporting the vast army of foreign missionaries out on the far-flung battle lines of the Cross, enduring hardships for Christ we would not think of enduring here at home, the noblest army of men and women the sun ever shone on.

Those who, by their offerings to Missions, make themselves a part of this mightiest movement of all ages, will, in the day of final reckoning, be entitled to share in its rewards. ⁸

18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Paul could not get over to Philippi at this time, but he totally trusted that God would look after them and meet all their needs.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings.

22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

Here Paul shows his faith in God and the faith of those whom he is surrounded by, including his jailers that had become believers.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, in their book "How to Read the Bible Book by Book", end their discussion of Philippians with this statement:

"The whole of this wonderful letter is dominated by the story of Christ in 2:5-11, the Christ we are called both to serve and to be like. To "know Christ" means to live and act in the believing community as He did in His incarnation and crucifixion." ⁹

This sums up our walk through Paul's letter to the Philippians. I pray that God's Word has opened to you an idea or thought that will stimulate you to go further for God in your walk with Jesus.

Let's pray!

¹Webster's New World Dictionary, pg. 136

²Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, pg. 147

³Nelson's Book of Stories, pg. 146

⁴Lawrence O. Richards, pg. 809

⁵Nelson's Book of Stories, pg. 146

⁶Student Bible, pg. 1240

⁷Lawrence O. Richards, pg. 781

⁸Halley's Bible Handbook, pg. 620

⁹Gordon Fee, Douglas Stuart, pg. 358

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