

PHILIPPIANS
The Letter of Joy
CHAPTER 4 (Verses 10-23)

RECAP OF CHAPTER 1:1-4:9

- Philippi was the church that blessed Paul's heart the most. They were the ones who had reciprocated his love and had lived their faith out in a purity that other churches he established had not.
- The city of Philippi was a miniature version of Rome. It was a "Rome away from Rome" in every respect.
- (1:13) "The whole praetorian guard" came to know that Paul was IN CHAINS FOR CHRIST!

POWER VERSE: (1:21) "FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN."

POWER VERSES: (2:6-11) Scholars consider this the greatest passage Paul wrote about Jesus!

POWER VERSES: (2:12-13) CONTINUE TO WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING

- (2:12) The Greek word for "work out" is *katargazesthai*. It means to bring to completion, showing that although we are gifted salvation by grace from God, we have personal responsibility to continue in that work of the Spirit through our obedience in walking out and working out our faith.
- (3:3) Paul gives us three examples of how true Christians are the true circumcision. "Who serve God in spirit." "Who boast in Jesus Christ." "Who put no confidence in the flesh."

POWER VERSE: (3:7) BUT WHATEVER WERE GAINS TO ME I NOW CONSIDER LOSS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST.

- (3:10) According to Paul, to know Christ intimately means to know the "power of His resurrection," the "participation in His sufferings" and "becoming like Him in His death."
- (3:12) Until another English translation of the Bible words it so beautifully, "I press on to try to grasp that for which I have been grasped by Jesus Christ."
- (4:1) Paul is saying to the Philippian church, compared to all my other achievements for Christ, you are my greatest achievement. At our final banquet of God, you are my crown.

POWER VERSE (4:4) REJOICE IN THE LORD AT ALL TIMES. I WILL SAY IT AGAIN—REJOICE!

- (vs5) Someone who has "gentleness" or *epieikeia* in their life knows when not to apply the strict letter of the law and when to shift or move from justice towards mercy.

POWER VERSES (4:6-7) 6 DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING, BUT IN EVERY SITUATION, BY PRAYER AND PETITION, WITH THANKSGIVING, PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD. 7 AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH TRANSCENDS ALL UNDERSTANDING, WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND YOUR MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS.

POWER VERSE (4:8) FINALLY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WHATEVER IS TRUE, WHATEVER IS NOBLE, WHATEVER IS RIGHT, WHATEVER IS PURE, WHATEVER IS LOVELY, WHATEVER IS ADMIRABLE—IF ANYTHING IS EXCELLENT OR PRAISEWORTHY—THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS.

- (vs9) Paul lastly says, imitate me. If anyone should not have had peace it was Paul. Yet, he put into practice that which he called them to. And in chains he was absolutely at peace in God.

THE SECRET TO TRUE CONTENTMENT (4:10-13)

- (vs10) After Paul challenges them to “Rejoice in the Lord always,” and to think about “whatever is pure and lovely,” he finds his rejoicing and joy in the Philippian church. That’s why this is the letter of joy.
- PAUL... WHAT MAKES ME REJOICE IN THE LORD? WHAT DO I THINK IS PURE & LOVELY? YOU!
- Ten years previously the Philippian church was the only church to give generously to support and make possible Paul’s ministry to the other Macedonian cities of Thessalonica and Berea. Later, when Paul turned south in Achaia, the Philippian church kept supporting him as he ministered in Athens and Corinth. Paul didn’t allow most churches to give to him much to their displeasure. 2 Corinthians 11:7
- Ten years have passed since their last gift. It could be they were unable due to their crushing poverty (mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8:1-2) or they were unaware of his needs, or they couldn’t locate him.
- But, when one of their own, Epaphroditus, was able to go to Rome, they gave Paul a generous gift.

- Now, Paul is a prisoner in Rome, confined to a small apartment or cell, chained daily to a Roman soldier, unable to work and provide for himself, probably surviving on a subsistent level on help from friends or the Philippian church. In many ways he was destitute, yet he was content.
- (vs11) Paul learned the powerful secret to a very elusive state of being. “I have learned to be content in whatever the circumstances.”

- In what area or circumstance do you need to find godly contentment?
- Paul uses one of the big words of pagan ethics for “content,” *autarkes*. It means to be entirely self-sufficient in all things and from all people. Some say this was the entire goal of the Stoics. FREEDOM!

- The Stoics aim was to remove or destroy all feeling or emotion from the human heart. Epictetus says “Begin with a cup or a household utensil; if it breaks, say, ‘I don’t care.’ Go on to a horse or pet dog; if anything happens to it, say, ‘I don’t care.’ Go on to yourself, and if you are hurt or injured in any way, say, ‘I don’t care.’ If you go on long enough, and if you try hard enough, you will come to a stage when you can watch your nearest and dearest suffer and die, and say, ‘I don’t care.’”

- T.R. Glover “The Stoics made of the heart a desert, and called it a peace.”

- Simply put, contentment for the Stoic was found through human achievement and emptying one’s self. For Paul, contentment was a divine gift that was infused and to be nurtured.
- WHEN YOU EMPTY YOURSELF... YOU’RE LEFT EMPTY. WHEN YOU ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE FILLED BY THE H.S. YOU ARE ZOE. LIVING EFFERVESCENT LIFE REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCE.

“The Stoics were self-sufficient. A true Christian is God-sufficient.”

- The Bible not only shows contentment to be a necessary virtue, it is also a command.
- “Be content with your wages” Luke 3:14. “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have.” Hebrews 13:5. Paul wrote Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:8 “If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”

- There are five principles for true contentment shown by Paul in the closing of this letter. Christian contentment is found in God’s providence, being satisfied with little, being unaffected by circumstances, being strengthened by God’s power, and focusing on others well-being.
- (vs12) Paul was content with God’s providence in every and all situations and therefore left it up to God to decide what that was and looked like. Whether he had plenty of food or was left hungry.

Whether he had plenty of resources and wealth, or in impoverished circumstances like being destitute in prison.

- Whatever we focus our eyes on will determine our perspective and values. If we focus on the world around us, we will always find someone healthier, stronger, richer, more popular, in a better circumstance or having a seemingly better life than us.
- WHAT DO YOU AND I FOCUS ON? WHAT DO WE VALUE? IS IT JUST US AND GOD LIKE THE APOSTLE PAUL? OR DO WE HAVE WONDERING EYES WHERE WE FEEL DISSATISFIED?
- Paul was “well content with weaknesses, with insults with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake.” 2 Corinthians 12:10. How was Paul content in the worst circumstances of life? Because, Paul knew that those trials when in Christ produced “godliness” which was a great gain of even more contentment!
- His secret was so simple and yet so profound. It’s found in one of the most famous Christian sentences ever spoke.

POWER VERSE (4:13) I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH HIM WHO STRENGTHENS ME.

- YOU CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST... WHO STRENGTHENS YOU! DO YOU BELIEVE THAT? DO YOU RECEIVE THAT TRUTH IN LIGHT OF YOUR CURRENT REALITY AND CONTEXT?
- The Greek word for “I can do” is *ischuo*. It represents “to be strong, to have power, to have resources, and ultimately to overpower.” “All things” is speaking of capability over physical needs.
- You and I can face “all things” not because we ignore or numb our current reality, or empty ourselves from anything that carries value or meaning. We can do “all things” because Christ the Creator and Son of God lives inside us and is the ruler and guide of our lives, and promises “to work everything together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

THE SECRET TO TRUE GENEROSITY (4:14-20)

- (vs14-17) Here Paul shows that he didn’t need this gift from the Philippian church to be content, but it was good for them to share in his troubles. Because of their sharing, they also share and partake in being responsible for all the churches Paul did on their behalf.
- Paul’s desire wasn’t their money or resources. His desire is that they could be a part of blessing and investing in the eternal Kingdom of God where they will be richly rewarded.

“Every good deed is recorded. Every good deed is rewarded!” Randy Hurst

MARK 10:28 (NIV) ²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” ²⁹ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” 100 TIMES!!! IN THIS LIFE AND THE ONE TO COME!

- (vs18) Paul releases the Philippians from any sense that they owe him. He’s saying, “Your investment through me to other churches and your kind gift to me through Epaphroditus is enough. You owe me nothing! My life is full!”
- The Philippian church’s offerings were a fragrant offering not to Paul, but to God Himself. It’s as if he’s saying, “Not only am I proud and pleased with you, but so is God!”

POWER VERSE (4:19) AND MY GOD WILL MEET ALL YOUR NEEDS ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY IN CHRIST JESUS.

- Paul as he winds down his final few words before his farewell, he speaks two important truths. There's nothing you can't do in Jesus. There's no true need you will ever have that won't be met in the glory and nature of Jesus.
- These were like the final words of a loving parent to their children before they pass to the other side. The gift of wisdom, love, confidence and promise that everything will be okay.
- Our needs are met not primarily out of God's endless resources, but in the endless glory of Christ Jesus.

FINAL GREETINGS (4:21-23)

- (vs21-22) Give my love to everyone. You belong to God. You are family in each other. You also have family in Rome now with Nero's household. They send their greetings!
- (vs23)

CLOSING: TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS, LOOK FULL IN HIS WONDERFUL FACE, AND THE THINGS OF EARTH WILL GROW STRANGELY DIM IN THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY AND GRACE.

THE RECEIVER IS A CONDUIT... A CONDUIT TO BLESS GOD, AND A CONDUIT TO BLESS OTHERS.
THE GIVER IS THE WATER OR THE SUPPLY AND THE RECEIVE OF BLESSINGS AND REWARDS

COMES IN UNDERSTANDING IT'S A PARTNERSHIP... TOM MCLANE IS A CONDUIT TO BRING WELLS FROM US TO NEEDY PEOPLE IN THE SAHEL. HE IS OUR SMILE, OUR HANDS AND FEET AND WALLET EXTENDED.

WHEN WE GIVE WE GIVE