

The Secret to Contentment! Php.4:10-13

The story of the rich industrialist and the fisherman.

Webster defines contentment as: **satisfied, happy, gratified or pleased**. Some people think that in order to be content in life, they must accomplish something. This is the message we hear in our society: in order to be happy you have to have more things, better vacations, fewer troubles. However, the problem truly lies in our sinful self. We often find ourselves discontented in our jobs, our marriages, our churches, our homes, etc. Contentment doesn't come naturally to us. *Benjamin Franklin once said, "To the discontented man no chair is easy"*

The Bible gives us a better approach to contentment. It's interesting that the man who can teach us about contentment sat in a prison cell waiting for execution and from there he wrote about contentment. Paul wrote a letter from prison to a church in Philippi to thank them for their support. It almost seems like an oxymoron to talk about being content while you are in prison.

The first thing we learn in Scripture about contentment is that it is not something you go after or pursue; rather, **it is something you choose to learn**. Contentment is a choice one makes.

Read text. Php.4:10-13

Paul is grateful for the Philippian church. *"I rejoice that you have renewed your concern for me."* You have always been concerned about me, but you didn't have the opportunity to show it.

(v.11) I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

When people go on mission trips to third world countries, they always come home admiring how happy or content people seem even though they don't have much stuffs in their lives. This is very much what Paul talks about here. *His being content didn't depend upon circumstances.*

What were some of his circumstances?

-I know what it is to be in need and he also knew what it is to have plenty.

Twice Paul tells us that he had learned contentment. (v.11, 12). He said he didn't care about the situation, he learned to be content whether he had much or little, in hunger and well fed, with money and without. This attitude is countercultural, it goes against our culture.

He learned contentment despite the situations. 2 Cor.6:3-10 Here are some of the situations in which Paul experienced in his life.

Despite all these things he found the way to be satisfied, content. **What was his secret?** It wasn't yoga or meditation, **it was Jesus Christ.**

I can do all these things because he strengthens me.

Contentment is learned through knowing God more intimately. Paul knew the Lord and he knew his power. Paul knew that God is bigger than any problem he could face, this is why he would face the trials with confidence and he learned to be satisfied with the things that came to his life.

We should define contentment then as *the inner sense of rest or peace that comes from being right with God and knowing that he is in control of all that happens to us.*

Contentment is an inner joy that doesn't depend on your situation, but on your relationship with God.

When you know that God is supreme, sovereign over all the things then you learn to trust him with everything, even when you face trials. This is when you get to learn contentment. You learn this perspective or inner peace. You will also experience joy which is not depended upon your situation. No wonder this man could say he would rejoice from a prison cell; rejoice in trials when most of us pray to be exempt from trials. **Why?** Because he truly knew the power of Jesus within him. He knew he worshiped a God who provides (V.19)

Paul said he can do all these things through Christ, Christ is truly what kept him going and kept him at peace in the midst of struggles he experienced. He learned to be satisfied with whatever came his way because he understood God is control and if he allowed those things to happen then he has a plan, therefore, I will be content. I will be still knowing God is there. This is what the song writer **Reuben Morgan** said in the song still *(When the oceans rise and thunders roar, I will soar with you above the storm. Father you are king over the flood, I will be still and know you are God.)*

You will navigate your life with the strength that only Jesus provides. When you depend on Jesus this much, you will find peace in the struggles and you will rejoice in his power to navigate any situation in life. You will welcome the adversity, the struggles because you know your God is bigger than what you face and he still has a plan in the midst of it all.

Contentment is learned when you and I rely upon the power of Christ to overcome any situation in this world. Paul knew that even when he felt weak, he was strong, because his strength came from the Lord. **2 COr.12:10**

How content are you in life right now? Maybe you too can learn the secret to contentment in spite of your situation. I always say that when God doesn't change your situation, then he will change your perspective, how you look at the situation. **Contentment is the inner joy, peace that comes from knowing that God is in control no matter the situation you face.** When we learn contentment the way Paul learned it, then you will be able to have peace in the midst of the storm and you will be able to say as he said "I can do anything through the strength Christ gives me."