

CONTENTMENT (Philippians 4:10-20)

- ...Today we come to that old theme of contentment, or namely, our lack of it. Ours is a day of discontentment, and it is pervasive. Never in human history have so many been given so much as the average American, yet, the level of dissatisfaction is higher than ever. We have "stuff" coming out our "ears," yet, discontentment reigns.
- ...We as Christians are not immune from the spiritual sickness of discontentment. Today's passage clearly teaches that contentment is not typically a natural ability, but is something learned, and to be experienced no matter the immediate circumstances of life. We are told, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."
- ...The secret of contentment is to be satisfied with Jesus Christ. He is the One for whom our hearts really long. We were made for Him, and until our hearts find their home in Him, dissatisfaction will be our plight.

THREE RESOURCES GIVEN TO CHRISTIANS MAKING US ADEQUATE AND PROVIDING DEEP CONTENTMENT.

...Only Jesus can satisfy our thirsting hearts. Our souls are restless until they find their rest in Him.

I. God's Providence: His Unseen Hand Cares For Us As We Journey Along. (v.10)

- A. Paul began this last section of his letter thanking the believers at Philippi for their gift of money. They had thought about Paul and heard of his need and collected a large sum of money and sent it to him. The gift caused him to greatly rejoice in the Lord.
...Paul had ministered the Gospel to them, (Acts 16) and now they wanted to care for him.
- B. Behind the scene: God was working. It was the Lord who put Paul into the hearts and minds of the Philippians to help by caring for his needs. This is called God's Providence.
1. Providence means: The word is made from two words, "pro" meaning before, and "video" meaning "to see."
 2. God's providence simply means, "God sees to it beforehand." It is the working of God in advance to arrange the circumstances and situations for the fulfilling of His purpose
- C. Correction: We sometimes get the idea that the universe runs like a great machine and that God Himself could not interrupt the wheels as they are turning. The Bible clearly tells that nature, and nature's laws, are the usual way God runs His world, but He is active and at any time can and does reach into our world to bring about His will.
- D. The story of Joseph illustrates the meaning of providence. (Genesis 45:5/50:20)
..."God sent me here before you to preserve life."
..."But as for you, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."
..."Know that life is not a series of accidents, but rather a series of appointments." (Wiersbe)
...This is providence, God's hand ruling and overruling in the affairs of life. Be content...God is in charge.

II. God's Power: He Will Provide The Strength We Need For All Things. (vv.11-13)

...It was the power of Christ within Paul that gave him spiritual contentment.

- A. Contentment is learned. Paul had learned this deep satisfaction through trial and testing.
1. Through it all, he found the unfailing power of God able to carry him through.
 2. The most important part of the Christian's life is the part that only God sees. Unless we draw on the deep resources of God by faith, we fail against the pressures of life.
 3. In essence, we like Paul can say, "I am ready for anything through the strength of the One who lives within me."
...You as a Christian have all the power within for the demands of life.
- B. Jesus taught the same thing in John 15:5, He is the vine and we are the branches. The branch bears fruit by drawing on the power of the vine. Such is the case for us, close communion with...

...In ourselves, we are puny, weak, and frail. We are self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency. (v.13)

III. God's Promise: He Will Richly Provide For All Of Our Needs. (v.18)

- A. Paul did not see this gift as simply coming from Philippi, he saw it as the supply of his need from heaven. Paul's trust was in the Lord. In essence, "You met my need, and God is going to meet your need. You met one need that I have, but my God will meet all of your needs. You gave out of your poverty, but God will supply your needs out of His riches in glory."
- B. The context: They had given sacrificially, in view of this, God promised to care for them.
- C. Contentment comes from adequate resources...and these make us adequate for every demand...

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

- 1. Have you learned that stuff will never provide you with the deep contentment and satisfaction that we all crave? Things are okay in themselves, but don't think they will be the "be all, end all" for you. God has made your heart, the human heart, so that contentment can only be found in Christ. Don't fall for the "cheap stuff." (Hebrews 13:5-6) Contentment is not found in things, people, experience, or in anything else...it is only found in Christ.
- 2. Discontentment is a thief, for it robs every experience of its God-given joy. Someone who is discontent, operates at a loss, for he is always thinking about what he lacks.
- 3. Be generous in your giving to the Lord in your church and in meeting the needs of others. If you give sacrificially, then God's promise of provision applies to you. He will meet your every need. Be a generous giver, for the Bible tells us, "God loves a cheerful giver." He loves such a one, because cheerful giving is the way God always gives to us.
- 4. God has provided for us a Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. God made the world, sin entered through one man, Jesus came from heaven to provide redemption through His cross, and one day God will restore the creation to its original glory. This can include you if you confess your sin and by faith believe on Jesus as your Savior and Lord.