

**March 20<sup>th</sup> 2022, If you have Jesus, you have everything.**

**Kent A. Tollakson          Philippians 4:10-23**

(SLIDE 1) Good morning church, good to be with all of you this morning, here or online.

Its an honor to work through the book of Philippians with you and I hope God has encouraged and convicted you in the past, that is my hope for today as well.

We will look at the last 14 verses of this letter, in Chapter 4. So grab your bibles or a bible in front of you (if you don't own a bible, please take that one or from the entryway ...it's our gift to you) but turn to Philippians, Chapter 4 and join David Williamson as he reads Gods word for us now, verse 10-23.

**The reading for today is from Philippians, Chapter 4, verses 10 - 23**

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share<sup>[f]</sup> my trouble. <sup>15</sup> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup> Even in (Thessa-la-niek-a) Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.<sup>[g]</sup> <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>21</sup> Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup> All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. <sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

**This is the word of God.**

Thank you David for reading Gods word for us today...

Please Join me in prayer,

Lord of all, Father Son and Holy Spirit, I praise you and thank you for all you have done and continue to do for all of us. **Your will** be done with our time this morning **and your will be done** with our lives. We thank you for your word, we recognize what a blessing it is to have your word! We realize that with our bibles, we have everything we need to know about You and our walk of faith. And, without your word, I shudder at the thought of how lost we would be. Help each of us spend more with You by reading the bible, and certainly bless our time of study this morning, help us gain ground upon the battlefield of faith that exists here on earth until you come again! Amen

(SLIDE 2) The end of this letter drips with beautiful truths about being Content. And these truths are anchored to the aspects of giving and receiving as well as where we place our trust and hope – within giving and receiving.

I have no story or a joke - but how about a few questions. How content are you with life? And, because I know all of us struggle with being content, more specific questions can be asked are “what is making you dis-content?” Is it a financial thing? Are you struggling with health? How about what you **have** in comparison to others, what about how well things are going for you with your job, or school, or sports....

If we are honest, we are often, dis-content in more than one way. Now, as you ponder about some dis-content aspect in life – have you ever thought about the ‘thing’ you are putting your trust or hope **in**?

I think I'm correct in the following observations: When we are discontent about anything we **own or don't own** = our hope is placed in the improvement or acquisition of those things. When we are discontent about people our hope is placed in them changing. When we are discontent about the successes or failures in life – we are trusting success as the only way to be content. When we are struggling with financial means – both our hope and trust are placed upon having more money.

Its clear to me, that we all need some help in the area of being content in our lives and God is using Paul's circumstances and words from over 2,000 years ago to help us big time, if we will trust and obey what they have to say to us! Lets dig in.

Paul often writes with genuine passion, and the first verse makes it clear that he is very happy about receiving financial assistance from the Philippians once again. But its very interesting that as soon as Paul says he is rejoicing in the Lord for their support, he quickly clarifies himself.

Which, if you write stuff down, I think it's helpful to take note of....

(SLIDE 3) **When you tell others your grateful, its good to explain yourself.**

John Piper helped me see this.

As soon as Paul writes the words expressing his joy, he immediately recognizes that the Philippians may get the wrong idea in 2 ways. First, they may take offense! Look at verse 10 *I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have **revived** your concern for me.* (Then, clarification!) *You **were** indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.* Paul did not want his friends (or others reading this) think – "I'm very happy you FINALLY sent

some help again, its been a while!!!!” Paul does not want anyone thinking that! He’s genuinely thanking them, He’s saying thank you very much AND compliments them with “I know your always concerned for me, you just didn’t know about my present situation until recently.”

The second way there may be a misunderstanding is, the Philippians (or anyone reading this), may think Paul’s only happy because he got some money! This is financial support, let’s not ignore that. A gift sent across hundreds of miles from Philippi to Rome is not a fruit basket, its cash. And in verses 11 and 12, Paul clarifies this.

<sup>11</sup> **Not** that I am speaking of being in need, (Do you see this right away, Paul is saying he is joyful that God moved them to send this money, but he would have been fine without it.) Why, why would Paul be fine if he didn’t get support? Let’s keep reading.... *for I have **learned** in whatever situation I am to be **content**.* And I hope it helps to point out the Greek word that Paul uses for ‘content’ here also means ‘satisfied’. (And WHAT has Paul learned to be content and satisfied about?) Verse 12.... <sup>12</sup> *I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.*

Paul doesn’t want someone saying “yeah, of course Paul is joyful, of course he is content, or course he is satisfied - who isn’t joyful, content and satisfied when they get unexpected money! Or even worse, someone might think “Yeah, He’s happy, he’s content, he’s satisfied because he got

PAID, it's clear he enjoys ministry because he gets money!" Paul is obviously in this line of work for the money.

Paul is making sure,... he is clarifying.... that is NOT the case – he wants them to see that he has learned to be content and satisfied whether PEOPLE give him money or not....and in other stuff too. Lets look....

Verse 12 *"I know how to be brought LOW (lacking in food, clothing, daily necessities) or ABOUNDING (having all I need). I am content and satisfied ... In **any** and **every** circumstance* he says. Its not just about money. But now Paul adds something, he has learned *"THE SECRET of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need."* Paul is declaring, a secret for being content and satisfied no matter what, It doesn't matter if he is **giving** his provisions away or **receiving** them.....I am content either way, when I use my secret. It makes you wonder what the secret is, we will get to that soon.

But how many of us can make that kind of statement in purity? How many of us can say we are completely fine no matter what? It's easier to see how we need help when we look at this from the position of being in crisis and in need - All of us struggle to be content in difficult situations. That's natural. We need more than natural – we need spiritual help. And that's what Paul has - the key that unlocks '**the secret**' to contentment .... is in verse 13, (SLIDE 4) "I can do all things through **Christ** who strengthens me." It's been said.....

**If you have Jesus, you have everything. (if your taking notes, note that!)**

This is a VERY popular verse! It's got to be one of the most copied, pasted, printed, and tattooed verses in all the world! (?) With so much popularity, though, it is often misused. I enjoy listening to a Michael DeFazio, a professor for New Testament at Ozark Christian college, I know him from Rightnow media. DeFazio tells about a well-meaning Christian evangelist who lifted weights (Eric told me its probably the same guy that he had speak to the youth group years ago). This guy would power lift and proclaim that he should never be able to lift what he was going to BUT... he would say... "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" and he would lift the weight! He would use his feats of strength to proclaim the gospel, so this was a very well-intended use of this verse, but a very bad misuse of this verse non-the less. I have misused this verse! I know I have; I can remember saying something to Keaton about his ability to do something – that I can't remember – but I guarantee I told Keaton that he could do something difficult in strength that had to do with hunting, fishing, or sports and that he could do it because Christ gives him strength. I was completely wrong in how I used this verse. I bet most of you are probably all guilty of this too.

Paul's strength to "do all things" had **nothing** to do with having the physical or mental strength to accomplish stuff. This verse had **everything** to do with his physical and emotional strength to be content regardless of success or failure. Paul had learned to find his strength, to be content and be satisfied - in Jesus, not in himself or within any kind of outcome.

This is what we ALL need to gain here, In Jesus Christ we can all find the strength to be satisfied and content regardless of what happens in our lives.

Why do we fail in this so often? What gets in our way of being OK. I think we get in trouble when we TRUST other things instead of God and place our HOPE in things instead of Christ. Misplaced trust and hope lead to; fear, anxiety, unfulfilled expectations, the grass is always greener when we gaze upon other side of... homes, possessions, jobs, health, family, kids,...the list is long my friends – is it not?

And let me be confessional here, I am FAR from where I should be in this. I have repeatedly failed to be content in life. In my youth, lots of dis-content with the bike, the car, the cloths, the results in sports, friends, job....and as the years passed I can't say I'm much better with many of those same things as well as a growing realization about how pathetic I can be. Like being discontent with catching fish or getting a big buck – isn't that sad. And the bigger things effect me too, dis-content with our house, our expenses, how things are going within parenting, ministry – you name it, I'm stressing out and discontent – dis-satisfied, about much of it. I have a lot to learn in this.

Its clear God knows we fail at this often, the bible is full of references about battling against the root issues causing DIS-CONTENT. Here are just a few...

Is41:10 – Fear not, do not be dismayed, Matt6:31 – do not be anxious about your needs, Phil4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything, 1Pt5:7 - cast your anxieties on Him, Josh1:9 Do not be frightened, 2Tim1:7 – God does not give us a spirit of fear, and back to Is41:13 - Fear not.

Just like Phil 4:13, the scriptures I just referenced also contain the 'secret' to being content and none of this secret is found within any us or our abilities.

Is41:10 – Fear not, do not be dismayed – FOR I AM WITH YOU, declares the Lord, Matt6:31 Do not be anxious about your needs – FOR your heavenly Father knows what you need, verse 32, Phil4:6 – Do not be anxious about anything – but ask God in prayer and GOD WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS, 1Pt5:7 – cast your anxieties on Him BECAUSE HE CARES FOR YOU, Josh1:9 – Do not be frightened – FOR GOD IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO, 2Tim1:7 – God does not give us a spirit of fear but GOD GIVES US A SPIRIT OF POWER, LOVE and SELF CONTROL, and Is41:13 – Fear not - for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

I want so badly to convey this deep truth in God's word. That, **through faith**, He is with you wherever you go, whatever you do, however things turn out. No matter how high the high or how low the low – God will never leave you or forsake you. Paul admits he had to learn how to be in that place of contentment – we all do. I want to grow in maturity here with all of you. I



want us to SEE and KNOW and TRUST God so much that we are content within any aspect of life. Possessions, Relationships, Successes or Failures, and Money – to cover most, if not all of the areas of dis-content.

I say this because I don't think God measures success in our lives by how things turn out. I think God measures success in our lives based on how faithful we are to Him. Are we faithful in trusting and following Him no matter what? That kind of trust, that kind of understanding of where to place our hope is the secret. That kind of trust brings strength and peace within turmoil. My dear wife can testify to this. When I had to resign from my job due to my sinfulness and our life was thrown into turmoil she did not place her trust or hope on anything less than Jesus Christ, and she can tell you – that trust provided her with a peace and strength that was not hers – it was the power of God. This is what Jesus was teaching in the parable of where we are to build our house. Jesus said (paraphrasing Matt 6 here) You will be wise to listen to me, by listening to my words you are like a person who builds their house upon the rock so when the rain, floods and winds come, their house will stand firm upon that rock. Do not be foolish and ignore my words, that is like a person who builds their house upon the sand, and when the rain, floods and wind come their house will fall, and great will be that fall! The house is our life and if we build our life on the rock of Jesus, that foundation will be strong – it cannot be swept away! But when we build our life on sand – on earthly wealth, property, possessions, successes, people - those will all be swept away, and us along with. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust' destroy...where thieves break in and steal. Lay up for

yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" Matt6:19

The things of this world are often very pleasing – what isn't pleasant about having a really nice house, successful employment, obedient kids, really nice stuff, faithful friends, a nice retirement plan... and any number of successes to list..... But in comparison to Jesus – they are nothing. Paul already said that – "Whatever gain I had,.... I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." Phil3:7-8

Finding strength in things will fail long term,

Trusting in money will fail long term,

And placing our hope in successes, or people, will fail long term.

Paul learned that strength to be content is found in Christ and Christ alone!

But I need to point out that Paul says he learned to be content in ALL circumstances. That means learning to be content in crisis OR success!

Isn't that interesting!? As I pondered this, I think we may be better at seeking contentment in Christ within difficulty because we find ourselves in distress so often. But how many of us turn to Jesus for the strength to be content when we get the job, when we get the house, when we get the win, when the kids are doing great, when we achieve a goal, or when we receive praise from other people - don't most of us find satisfaction within ourselves in these times? Don't most of us pat ourselves on the back? Its tricky, because we do put effort into things. God tells us to put effort into things – Go therefore and

make disciples (Matt28:19) that takes effort, work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Phil2:12) that takes effort too, but Jesus tells us to put effort into ABIDING in Him to bear fruit, but He also clarifies who is in charge of the outcome, Jn15:5. .... *Whoever abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*"

As Paul reflected on contentment. I am guessing here, I think Paul was able to see that God had taught him how to be content and satisfied whether he could see 10,000 disciples come to faith or 1 because it is Gods power, not his that produces fruit – in that powerful truth Paul was free to work hard for God and be content in whatever came of it.

That is a lot of digging within the first 4 verses! But please remember – Phil4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Doe does not mean you can accomplish stuff with Jesus – it means you can find the strength to be content whether things work out or not.

The next 10 verses will go much faster.

Verse 14-16 is Paul restating how thankful he is for the Philippians support and praises them for supporting him when no-other church did 10 years earlier.

(SLIDE 5) Then in verse 17 we see Paul clarify once again that he is not rejoicing because HE got money.... he is rejoicing because he recognizes the Philippians gift is an outward expression of their inward love for God! He knows God recognizes their gift as a credit to their faith! It makes Paul

so happy to know that the people he helped know Jesus are being active in their faith!!!

With this abundant praise to his friends for their partnership in advancing the gospel, Paul makes a bold statement about God.

(SLIDE 6) Verse 19 – “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

This is not saying God will give you all kinds of things if you give to others! That is a false teaching, that is a prosperity gospel (give earthly things and you will get earthly things!). Please recognize that this verse tells us that God will always supply us with what we need – not so much with what we greed.

What is it we NEED? We need Jesus. God has given us EVERYTHING WE NEED in Him – (SLIDE 7) *“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”*(Jn3:16) So I will say again, God will always give us what we need, salvation. God does NOT always give us what we greed. That **salvation love** inspires verse 20 *“To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”* Isn't God's love for us sweet!

To close, Paul wrote letters like lots of people did in that day and to end a letter it was common to send greetings from other people that knew each other – So verses 21-22 contain greetings from 'brothers' and ALL the saints – everybody is saying hi! But also.... as encouragement....Paul tells them,

*“especially those of Caesars household”* greet them! He wanted to make sure these faithful Philippians who have often sent him support to advance the gospel, knew that even Roman servants, who many looked to Caesar as a god – know knew and loved Jesus!

So, even though Paul has been more than clear that these kinds of results are not needed to provide him contentment – because those results are up to God – he still shares this news because when disciples are made and people are saved it is always something to rejoice over! (Jesus said there will be more rejoicing in Heaven for one saved sheep than for the 99 already saved.)

(SLIDE 8) I hope all of us grow in our ability (get stronger) to be content within the difficulties of life. I want this so much because it would be great for **non-believers** around us to wonder and ‘ask’ how we can be so content no matter what is happening? - Because our answer is so simple and so sweet – we are content, we are satisfied – because when we have Jesus, we have everything.

Lets Pray.