

In Christ: Satisfaction of Power

Philippians 4:10-12: But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. NASU

In verse 10, we get to the crux of Paul writing to the Philippians. The church in Philippi, of their own volition, had sent a generous financial gift to support Paul and those who labored alongside him in the work of the Lord. This is his thank-you note to both the Philippians and the Lord. Paul *rejoiced in the Lord greatly* who had moved in the hearts of the Philippians and enabled them to provide the necessary means for supporting his work. The generosity of the Philippians reflected their partnership in the gospel and their love for Paul and the Lord. ***James 1:17***

James 1:17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

Twice Paul mentions the church's concern for him and how they desired to be a blessing to him. However, circumstances prevented them from delivering the collection to Paul in a timely manner, it seemed "life had happened." For whatever reason, the church was unable to deliver their gift to Paul. Once the means for delivering the gift were arranged, the Philippians wasted no time in fulfilling their desire to support Paul in his ministry. The delay did not disappoint Paul, rather he was grateful that they had sent the gift, which demonstrated their concern for him (*at last you have revived your concern for me*). ***Proverbs 3:27-28***

Proverbs 3:27-28: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. 28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.

What thrilled Paul even more than the specific financial aid was the heart of the Philippians to give to the work of the ministry. As Paul knew the financial situation of the believers in Philippi; they were not rich thus their gift was extremely generous and demonstrated a heart for the things of the Lord and specifically for Paul in his work. Additionally, their support of Paul was self-initiated, Paul had not asked for help or a gift of support. ***Proverbs 11:25, 22:9; Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:5-11***

Proverbs 11:25: The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered.

Proverbs 22:9: He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.

Acts 20:35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

PHILIPPIANS

2 Corinthians 9:5-8: So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness. 6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

Paul knew how to be content regardless of his circumstances, whether he was in or out of prison, living in scarcity (waiting for the promised support) or in *prosperity* (having received the support). Paul had *learned to be content in any and every circumstance*. Paul's contentment was not something innate in him but a trait that the Lord had cultivated in to him. Paul's attitude of contentment was a consequence of a deliberate decision he made and not the consequence of his circumstances or the situations. Our decisions, made before the reality of the circumstance or situation and dictates our attitude in the situation. ***Matthew 6:31-34; 1 Corinthians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-9; Hebrews 13:5***

Matthew 6:31-34: "Do not worry then, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear for clothing?" 32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

1 Corinthians 4:11-13: To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; 12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; 13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

1 Timothy 6:6-9: But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

Hebrews 13:5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU"

PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. NASU

Paul effectively dispels any notion that his contentment was a result of his own innate ability to resist the external pressures and temptations of the world. He rejects the Stoic philosophy that advocated self-sufficiency and self-control as the source of contentment. Instead, Paul attributes his contentment to the strength he receives from Christ. Paul's statement is not only true for himself but was true for the Philippians and is true for all believers. It is through Christ, who gives us the strength to endure all things, that believers can find contentment in every situation. True contentment is not found in self-reliance but in dependence on God's grace and sufficiency, whereby believers can transcend the circumstances of the world and find a deeper and lasting contentment that surpasses human understanding.

The key to the contentment Paul has learned (or had been initiated into – a technical term of the mystery religions), is being in Christ (*en Christos*) the literal of “*through Him*.”

en (en); a primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), and (by implication) instrumentality (medially or constructively), i.e. a relation of rest (intermediate between a primary preposition; (to or into) and a primary preposition denoting origin (the point from which an action or motion proceeds

The phrase “*through Him*” [in Christ] denotes a permanent fixed position and the origin of power: *in Christ*. Being in Christ, He is able to work through a believer to do anything He wants; “*in Christ*” modifies the “*all things*.” Believers are able to do whatever the Lord calls them to do, through the working of His power in and through them, given that the believer does it in His time and His way. *Isaiah 40:29-31, 41:10; 46:9-10, 55:11; Ephesians 3:14-16; 2 Corinthians 3:4-6*

Isaiah 40:29-31: He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. 30 Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

Isaiah 41:10: 'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Isaiah 46:9-10: "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, "My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'

Isaiah 55:11: So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

PHILIPPIANS

Ephesians 3:14-16: For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man

2 Corinthians 3:4-6: Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Philippians 4:14-19: Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. 15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. 17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. NASU

Paul commends the Philippians for their generosity (*you have done well to share with me in my affliction*). This was not the first time the Philippians had given to Paul; they were regular supports of Paul, those whom he could count on to provide needed assistance. Additionally, the past regular generosity of the Philippians, although beneficial to Paul, had also benefitted the Philippians. Their support made them active participants in Paul's work of bringing the Gospel to the lost. Likewise, they would be active participants in the Lord's rewards in the future and in the present. ***Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 10:40-42; Romans 15:26-27; Hebrews 6:10; 3 John 5-8***

Proverbs 19:17: One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.

Matthew 10:40-42: "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

Romans 15:26-27: For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

3 John 5-8: Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; 6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Paul emphasizes the blessings the Philippians have from the Lord for their unselfish, sacrificial giving. Paul's thankfulness reflects the Lord's pleasure; his thankfulness relates to the blessings the Philippians have received (*the profit which increases to your account*). Paul goes back again to his contentment and recognizes the working of the Lord in the hearts of the Philippians believers, as evidenced by their sacrificial giving. **Proverbs 11:24; Hebrews 10:34-39, 13:16**

Proverbs 11:24: There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want.

Hebrews 10:34-36: For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Hebrews 13:16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Paul assurance to the Philippians that God would meet their every need was a consequence of their unselfish giving of themselves and their resources. Paul is also giving the believers a word of encouragement for the believers who had given sacrificially of themselves financially to support Paul and may be wondering if they had overdone their support; if they had given as the Lord had led them, they could trust that "God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." God supply would come in the same manner that Paul can do all things, *in Christ*. Paul uses the same Greek word "en" – the promise is to those who are *in Christ*, and do things in His ways, with His motives, for His purposes, in His time. The meeting of needs is God's responsibility. **Matthew 6:25-34; 2 Corinthians 8:3-5, 9:8-13; 1 Timothy 6:17-19**

Matthew 6:25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

PHILIPPIANS

2 Corinthians 8:3-5: For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

2 Corinthians 9:8: And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

1 Timothy 6:17-19: Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Philippians 4:20-23: Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Paul concludes this epistle as he began it — on a personal, warm, and friendly basis of Christian love and fellowship.