

// ILLUSTRATION //

I read a story about a **quaker**.

This quaker offered property to anyone who considered himself content.

When a man came to claim the lot, the quaker asked him, "if you're content, why do you want my lot?"

- H. A. Ironside, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon

// INTRODUCTION //

We live in a culture of **discontent**, of **dissatisfaction**.

For so many of us, it seems like we are always wanting more. It seems like we are never satisfied.

We live in a culture of **comparison** and **envy**.

- We see someone with a **better car**, and we want a better car.
- We see someone with **more money**, and we want more money.
- We see someone with a **better marriage**, and we want a better marriage.

We live in a culture that says, "if I could just get this one thing, I'll be happy."

- If I could just make **\$2/hour more**, I'll be happy.

The problem with all that, is that it is a lie. **It is a deception**. Even if we get that raise, even if we get a better car, even if we get that thing that we want, we'll still want more.

For so many of us, even as Christians, **we can get wrapped up** chasing after a better circumstance, a better car, a better job, a better high, a better spouse, more money, more shoes, more purses, and so forth.

And we spend our whole lives chasing after things that will never satisfy us.

So what can we do? **As Christians, how are we do live in light of this?**

The Bible speaks to this in Philippians 4. If you have a Bible, let's make our way there.

// SERIES: LIVING WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL //

This morning, we are closing out our series called "Living Worthy of the Gospel". In this series, we have been looking at portions of scripture from Philippians.

27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel

Philippians 1:27

Paul is saying, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Conduct yourselves, live in such a way that is deserving of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul is basically saying, you've been saved, washed clean of all your sins, delivered from bondages, transformed in your heart and mind, now live like it.

Live worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Over the course of this series, we have looked at various passages from Philippians and seen what it looks like to live worthy of the gospel.

// BE CONTENT IN JESUS //

As we close this series, we want to say, if we are going to live worthy of the Gospel, then we must be content in Jesus.

// SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:10-13 //

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² 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. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:10-13

// EXPLANATION //

Paul says, I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

The kind of **contentment** Paul is referring to is a **state of mind**, or perspective, or mindset, that is **independent of outward circumstances**, so as **to not be moved** by **envy, anxiety, and discontent**.

And Paul says, I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. I know how to face plenty and how to hunger, how to have an abundance and to be in need.

Paul has certainly faced some **difficult things**, even as a Christian.

²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28

While we know much about his hardships, we know little about his experiences of **abundance**, but we can imagine what they were.

We know that in Philippi when the church was born, they had a convert who was quite wealthy – Lydia, who was a prosperous seller of purple. Not to mention, they had another notable convert, the Philippian jailer.

Certainly, there were times in Ephesus and Corinth when times were good, and Paul was blessed and taken care of as he shared the Gospel with others.

Paul says, in any and all circumstances, I have **discovered the secret** of being content.

The secret is **Jesus**. The secret is that he can find true, lasting contentment, in Jesus. The secret to contentment is finding strength in Jesus.

He says, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Paul is content because he is totally dependent upon Christ. And that contentment is available to each one of us.

We can have contentment in Jesus because we know we are His children. We are sons and daughters of the King.

We can be content in every situation because our contentment is not based on things, or circumstances, but on our relationship with Jesus. Jesus brings **joy** in every situation, **peace** in every situation, **satisfaction** and **contentment, in every situation**. If we are obedient, and faithfully serving Him, we will experience a contentment that surpasses all things.

Paul is able to face all circumstances with contentment.

Thus, what Paul says is that in whatever circumstances I find myself, in whatever extremes –

- Whether experiencing **abundance** with the **wealthy**
- Or **fellowshipping** with the **poor**
- Or **struggling** to proclaim the gospel to people who **don't want to hear**
- Or enduring the **wrath** of the **establishment**

- Or bringing **peace** to the **church**
- Or **languishing** in **prison**

Paul says, I can be content and “can do all things through him who strengthens me”.

// APPLICATION //

I think it’s entirely possible for us to read these words, and hear these words, and walk away feeling, “good for Paul.”

The reality is that many Christians walk around with absolutely zero contentment in their lives. So how do we actually receive this kind of contentment that Paul talks about? How do we walk in this kind of contentment?

1. We must trust in God’s providence.

As Christians, our whole worldview needs to shift.

We need to learn to **trust** in God.

We must realize that **God is big**. God is so big that He simply spoke this gigantic universe into existence. God is so big, that nothing, absolutely **nothing**, is **impossible** for Him. At His name, **everything must bow**, every mountain, every disease, every creature, every planet, every angel, every demon, every man and woman, must bow.

God is not only big, but **He is in control**. He is sovereign, He is the ruler, He is the King of all creation. He is the master. He is the man. He is boss.

Nothing happens outside of His control. Everything that happens is either because God has commanded it to happen or because God has allowed it to happen.

Not only that, but this God who is big, and who is in control, **loves us**, and **wants what is best for us**. And He has the power to work things out for the better – for His glory.

²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good

Genesis 50:20

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

We need to **trust** in this. We need to **believe** this. We need to **lean** on this. We need to **rest** in this. We need to **rely** on this.

2. We must be thankful for all things.

¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Ephesians 5:18-20

Learn to be thankful for everything you have, even if you have little or nothing.

- Maybe we don't have the **job we want**, we need to be thankful for what we have.
- Maybe we don't have the **shoes we want**, we need to be thankful for what we have.
- Maybe our **lives haven't panned out** the way we expected, we need to be thankful for the life that we have.

We can do this in prayer. Each and every day, whether things are good, or things are bad, thank God for what you do have.

- If you have a **car**, thank God for it.
- If you have a **home**, thank God for it.
- If you have **food** to eat, thank God for it.
- If you have **quarters** for laundry, thank God for it.
- If you have a **job**, thank God for it.
- If you have a **spouse**, thank God for it.

3. We must pursue the work of the Kingdom.

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:25-33

Ultimately, we are only going to experience the greatest level of **content**, **satisfaction**, **fulfillment**, **joy**, and **peace**, when we are doing what God wants us to do.

This involves being **obedient** to God, spending time in **His Word**, spending time in **prayer**, and **telling others** about Jesus.

There is nothing that compares to the joy and contentment you will walk in when you are doing what God has called you to do.

// CHALLENGE //

I want to challenge you this morning.

I want to challenge you to **search your heart** and search your life.

Are you allowing your contentment to be based on something other than Jesus?

If so, **what is that thing?** Or what are those things?

- Maybe it's **money**,
- Maybe it's **sex**,
- Maybe it's **alcohol**,
- Maybe it's your **children**,
- Maybe it's your **job**,
- Maybe it's something else.

Whatever it is, identify it.

I want to challenge you to place that before the Lord this morning in prayer.

In a few moments, we are going to pray. And I want to challenge you to pray to God, and **tell Him you don't want your contentment**, your joy, your peace, **to be determined by this thing**, or these things.

Then, verbally confess that you want to find complete and total contentment in Jesus.

And throughout this week, trust God, be thankful for everything, and live for Jesus. And I promise that you will walk in a level of contentment, joy, peace, satisfaction, that you've never experienced before.

// CONCLUSION //

Imagine a life where you didn't have to have certain things to be happy or content. This can be your life.

Imagine a life where you walked in joy, and peace, even when things were falling apart all around you. This can be your life.

Imagine being content and fulfilled right now, right where you're at, in your current situation.

If you are **following** Jesus and **serving** Him **faithfully**, Paul's confident words are yours: "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

At times, some of us will experience prosperity. But all of us will know devastating hardships. But if Christ is the center of our life, we can be content.