

PENINSULA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Learning by Experience Philippians 4:10-23

Paul is drawing this **very personal letter** to a close.

- He's not writing a text book here
- Have you ever had a letter you **reread** many times?
- **He continues to build them up**

This includes one of the most distorted & abused verses in the NT

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Vs. 10, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last **your care** for me has **flourished again**; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity."

They gave him **more than provision**

- Their **genuine care** gave him **joy!**
- Joy in jail, under threat of death
- **Great joy** – In the Lord*
- "**Flourished again**" – It's who they **Are**.
- "Surely you did care". He affirms **he knows who they are**.

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Vs. 11, "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I **have learned** in whatever state I am, **to be content**"

This is **not about the money**

- God has **used life** to free him from circumstances
- David knew it – **Psalm 23:1**

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I Timothy 6:6-8, "Now **godliness with contentment is great gain**. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry

nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."

Hebrews 13:5, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; **be content with such things as you have**. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"

Matthew 20:1-15 – Workers in the marketplace

- Contentment **not found in comparison**

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Vs. 12-13, "I know how to be **abased**, and I know how to **abound**. Everywhere and **in all things** I have learned both to **be full** and to **be hungry**, both to **abound** and to **suffer need**. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Does it look like he's saying, "I can do anything I set out to do because Christ will empower me to do it?"

- When we attempt to use God's Word **for our purposes**, we've dethroned Him and declared ourselves to be **in His place**.
- That's **a dangerous place to be!**

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Godly contentment is **not defined** or empowered by our circumstance

- **When** is our rejoicing most rewarding?
- When we are full & satisfied?
- Or when **real need** arrives?
- Are we equally content in **either or both?**

.....
So... what empowers our most enjoyable rejoicing?

- **Our Need!**

Vs. 14-15, “Nevertheless you have done well that **you shared in my distress**. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church **shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.**”

- Devoted, **compassionate care** distinguishes those **who do**
- **James 2**, Talk is cheap. **Demonstrate it**

Vs. 16-17, “For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. (**Vs. 10**) Not that I seek the gift, but I seek **the fruit that abounds to your account.**”

- He is rejoicing **For Them** most! (**2:3-4**)
- **Proverbs 11:25**, “The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.”

Vs. 18, “Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, **a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.**”

- We are generous to bless others
- But **God is pleased even more**
- Who is **He** happiest for? – **Both**
- Who are they happiest for? – **Each other**

Vs. 19, “And my God shall supply all **your need** according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

- Do you need a new Gulfstream? (\$75 Million)

We learn compassionate giving by receiving **when in need**

- **Givers** are uncomfortable receiving
- **Takers** feel entitled & don’t appreciate it

Vs. 20, “Now **to our God and Father** be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

- God is glorified when we follow His example

Vs. 21-22, “**Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren** who are with me **greet you. All the saints**

greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.”

Here is **the heart** of the **whole letter!**

“**Greet, Saints & Brethren**”

- He is using **POWERFUL** words here!

Think of the video of that soldier returning from combat

- The **affection**, the **passion**, the **embrace!**

He is saying, “**Receive God’s original, sacred family members!**”

- With the very **affection of Christ!**

Psalm 16:2-3, “O my soul, you have said to the LORD, ‘You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You.’ **As for the saints who are on the earth, ‘They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.’**”

The world increasingly **de-personalizes human interaction**

- Reducing it to the digital **exchange of data**
- As often as possible, **automated**

The affection of Christ has been reduced to membership of a fraternal or social organization

Paul loves these people, and he’s concerned they are in danger of losing **what Christ died to give us.**

Loneliness comes from having no one to **safely share** our deepest thoughts & feelings with.

John 13:34, 14:27, 16:33 & 17:20-23

He said it to them, and **he’s saying it to us**

Vs. 23, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ **be with you all.** Amen.”