



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Philippians 45 Contentment Part 02

Philippians 4:10-20, *But 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. ¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² 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. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

¹⁴ Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 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. ¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul writes a new large section before some conclusion.

This section as a unit because it is a unit of thought. Contentment is the thought which occupy the Apostle Paul.

Bible has lot to say about being content.

1 Timothy 6:6-8, *Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And 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."*

Bible identifies contentment as a virtue and commands us to be content as well.

You are to be content with whatever you have.

You are to be content with food and clothing.

You are to be content with your wages.

You are to be content because you understand that an utterly, totally, infinitely, and supernaturally resourceful God will never leave you or forsake you.

- ✓ Contentment is a virtue.
- ✓ Contentment is a command.

We are called to contentment.
We are called to be satisfied.
We are called to say I have enough.

Most of us do not experience that.
Paul did.
Paul was a satisfied man.
He was a contented man.

When we write a letter to someone, we love will include some expression of thanks for something that they have done for us.

That is common part of the letter. The apostle Paul, before he concludes this letter to the Philippians whom he loved very deeply, wants to express at some length his gratitude to them for their kindness. They have loved him ever since the beginning.

They had opportunity to share that love with him by sending Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus brought some gifts to meet his needs. The church sent him to meet the needs of Apostle Paul.

The whole text is intended as a final statement of gratitude for the generous gift received at the hands of Epaphroditus.

Paul writing this letter as a prisoner. He is chained to a Roman soldier. He was under house arrest in the city of Rome. He is in

isolation. He is unable to move about. He has lost the freedom to work and minister.

Therefore, he is in need.

He is afflicted with the difficulty of being a captive. During this need the Philippians having heard of it have sent to meet his necessities.

Very trying time. Paul had very little or nothing of what this life considers benefits. These dear Philippians, having heard about his need, had sent gifts and he expresses gratitude to them.

So, that the primary intent of these verses is an expression of thanksgiving. Typical of Paul's letter beneath the surface of the expression of thanks the Spirit of God goes deeper than what we read initially to show us something that is profoundly impactful in our own lives.

Here we find a contented man!

1. God's Providence

Having confidence in God's providence.

2. Satisfaction

Satisfaction with little.

3. Freedom from circumstances

Freedom or independence from circumstances.

4. Divine Power

Paul was content because he was sustained by divine power!

V 13, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Paul says I am sustained by Christ who strengthens me.

Our sufficiency comes from being attached to the sufficient one.
We are not self-sufficient, we are Christ-sufficient.

Because we are linked to His life and linked to His power in us
that we have sufficiency.

What does Paul meant when he says that he can do all things
through Christ?

Paul is connected to Christ.

Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Because of that, Paul has a supernatural divine strength for every situation.

Paul does not mean that he can go forever without eating.
Paul does not mean that he can go forever without drinking.
He can go forever without sleeping.

He knows that if he does not have food eventually, he will die.
If he does not have something to drink eventually, he will die.

There is a limit to the physical extremities which he can endure.

But what Paul is saying is that when he comes to the end of his own resources, then he can experience the power of Christ to sustain him until a provision is made.

Paul is talking here about the material world when he says, "I can do all things."

He could have said, "I can endure all things."

Those extremities of life where I have no more human resources, I am infused with the strength of Christ.

Isaiah 40:30-31, *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with*

wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

Paul is talking about coming to the bottom of human resources and finding there the strength of Christ.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of this is located at the end of 2 Corinthians.

Paul had received several revelations from God.

He had had visions of Christ. He had been the tool of God by which God had revealed His truth. Because of this it might have been a grave temptation for him to be proud.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10, *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Paul found his contentment in the manifest strength of Christ that comes to the believer when he has exhausted his human resources.

Contentment comes when you experience the sustaining power of Christ in those times when you have no human strength.

To him who has no might, God increases strength.

Paul says, "I am content, I have seen the power of God."

We should be praying for enough distress in our life, for enough difficulty in our life to cast us on Christ that we might see His power explode in our behalf and therein to be content.

Through my life I have seen God do things that only He could do. When I was at the end of my human resources and that has provided for me the visible and measurable expression of the power of God.

When you see the power of God manifest in the time of your extremity, when you have no other way to turn, but to cast yourself on His strength and say, "Lord, this is a situation I cannot resolve, there are not resources for this, I am dependent on You."

Then you will see the power of God move. Therein lies your contentment that He is at hand and He is involved.

This word, “to be strong,” the word that is translated, “I can do,”

It is translated in Acts 19:16, “overpowered.”

It is translated in Acts 19:20, “prevailed.”

It is translated in James 5:16 “effective,” or “powerful prayer of a righteous man.”

It is a word of strength and power.

Paul is saying, “I have the power to go through all things.”

When the Greeks want to lay the emphasis, they put that word first. All things I have the power to endure.

What do you mean all things?

Context:

V 11-12, *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹²I 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.*

Paul was talking about being filled or going hungry, having abundance of material things, or suffering material need.

Paul is saying, “I have the strength to go through all things, all deprivations, all difficulties in the material world, all times of prosperity,”

Talking about the material world.

“I have the ability to deal with any kind of material circumstance because of my spiritual strength.”

- I can go without food, for a while, obviously,
- I can go without clothes,
- I can go without comfort,
- I can go without warmth,
- I can go without freedom,
- I can go without care,
- I can endure pain,
- I can endure danger,
- I can endure persecution,
- I can endure suffering,
- I can endure threat,
- I can endure all of that on the outside because I am so strengthened on the inside.

When you get to the point where you are at the end of your resources and you are dependent on the Lord and you see the movement of His power, you find contentment.

One of the great prayers of the apostle Paul.

Ephesians 3:14-20, *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

You as a believer have a resource within you,
the life of God within you, which is a power source that can sustain things that you do not imagine it can sustain.

The Spirit of God strengthens the inner man so that we are able to do beyond what we think we can do, according to the power that works in us which power is activated at the moment when human resources are gone.

You ever know anybody who had a pacemaker?
It only kicks in when their heart does not work.

It is a sustaining power.

As long as the heart functions properly, they don't need the pacemaker. If it does not function properly, the pacemaker takes over.

Similarly, we have this resource, this reservoir of spiritual power that moves into action when we have come to the end of our own resources.

So, Paul says, "I have the ability physically, materially to overcome anything because I am so infused with spiritual strength that I can do what I couldn't imagine I could do."

What a great promise!

That promise is available to every believer, that if you will experience contentment, you will learn it having come to the extremity of your life and learn that when you have to have the divine power, it is there.

"Christ that strengthens me,"

The Lord infuses us with strength. He puts it in us when we are at our extremities.

When you have learned not to depend upon your own resources, but when you have been to the desert then you turn to God, you find the strength that is there to go through this situation.

Somebody will say that I have been to the end of myself and come to the limit of all my resources and I didn't find anything there to comfort me.

Do you know why?

I believe that when you have come to the end of your resources, you will only experience the power of God and the contentment that comes with it if at the end of your resources you have been moving in the will of God.

If you have been living a life of sin, and you are now at the bottom of the pit where sin has led you, do not expect the Lord to step in, deliver His power, and bring you contentment. What He might do is add chastening to the pain that your circumstances have already produced.

Health is something that results from right living. Health cannot be obtained directly or immediately or in and of itself.

That the power is the result of the right living. Just like health is the result of right living in the physical dimension.

The point is this: when you come to the end of your extremity, the power of God will be there and with it, contentment if you have been living right.

These people who call themselves as Christians, who are living sinful wicked unfaithful lives. Then, they have problems. When

they get to the extremity of that problem and cannot solve it and do not see the power of God to change the situation, they want to run off and get a quick fix.

They have never dealt with the real issue.

They cannot get the power of God from a counsellor.

Cannot get the power of God from a therapist.

Cannot get the power of God from some formula.

Cannot just change your entire life, experience the fullness of the power of God and contentment if you have been living a sinful pattern.

There is no quick fix.

Paul says, "I can go through anything in the strength of Christ, but I can't do it without the strength of Christ and the strength of Christ is only his when he walks in obedience."

People who run off to get somebody to fix them.

Probably do not understand the power of Christ,

May not know the power of Christ because this is the product of their own sin.

Sometimes it is not the product of their own sin.

Sometimes they need biblical instruction, biblical encouragement, biblical counsel, and help. But many people are looking for a quick fix of a pattern of sin that has led them

to a result they cannot resolve, that never will be resolved until they begin to live an obedient life.

How do you experience the sustaining power of God and contentment?

It is the result of obedience.

How can I know contentment?

Being confident in God's sovereign providence,
being satisfied with little,
being independent of circumstances, and
being sustained by God's power.