

Learning the Secret of Contentment - Philippians 4:10-13 – March 24th, 2019

- I've titled today's teaching, "Learning the Secret of Contentment."
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the biggest issues we deal with, especially in America, this would have to be it.
- Namely, that of discontentment in our jobs, in our marriages and dare I say even in our churches. We are always wanting more.

- I would suggest that this is the lie of the enemy, and it actually started in the garden when he got Eve to be discontent with God.
- The problem is that he does the same thing today in getting Christians to become discontent with that which God has provided.
- As one so aptly said it, "often times the source of our discontent is thinking and believing that our greeds are really our needs."

- Enter our text today; where the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, shows us how it is that we as Christians can live content lives.
- What follows are three practical ways to learn contentment, regardless of the circumstances in which we may find ourselves.

1. Be Thankful (Verse 10)

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

- In verse 10 the Apostle Paul expresses his gratitude for sending Epaphroditus with financial support while imprisoned in Rome.
- It's important to understand he would have had to travel over 800 miles to get to Paul and bring him their financial assistance.
- It's also important to note in order for a prisoner to survive, they had to rely on the help of their family and friends to provide.

2. Be Satisfied (Verses 11-12)

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

- I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance of what Paul is saying here in these two verses concerning his situation.
- Here he sits in this Roman prison, and he testifies that he has learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.
- In other words, Paul was truly satisfied regardless of his circumstances because his contentment wasn't based on what he had.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 - 6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Hebrews 13:5-6 - 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." 6 So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

3. Be Confident (Verse 13)

13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

- While I realize that this is a famous life verse for many, I think we need to revisit the context in which the Apostle Paul says this.
- By that I mean there have been those who have taken this to mean that we can do anything we want through Christ's strength.
- This has led to the false teaching of what's known as the prosperity gospel that says all you have to do is name it and claim it.

- What Paul is saying here is in and of ourselves we cannot do anything apart from Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Specifically, when it comes to being content, especially if the circumstances in your life are such that you find yourself in want.
- In other words, if we're ever to learn contentment, we must come to that place where we realize Christ can give us the strength.

Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble.

Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment.

Job 1:20-21 - 20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."