Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Secret of Contentment, Part 2
Scripture: Philippians 4:13
Code: 50-44

Let's open our Bibles to Philippians chapter 4 and return to our study of the secret of contentment. We're looking at Philippians chapter 4 verses 10 through 19 as a unit of thought in the mind of the Spirit of God and from the pen of the apostle Paul. And here, he is writing about the subject of contentment. In verse 11 he writes, "Not that I speak from want for I have learned to be content." And I would venture to say that everyone would like to experience contentment. That's a wonderful, rich, and somewhat elusive word. I would suppose that we would all agree that most people are sort of desperate in wanting to be content, wanting to be satisfied, wanting to be sufficient.

Well, I have good news for you. There is someone who can provide contentment. And I received a flyer this week that tells all about this person. This is what it says, "All who are unsuccessful, unlucky, dissatisfied, and discontent, let the woman who knows help you. She removes evil influence. If husband or wife is unfaithful, see her now. She settles lovers' quarrels, helps you gain back the lost love, and the affection of the one you love, and shows you the way to happiness. She names friends and enemies and tells you if friends are true or false. She locates lost and stolen property. If you have any problem concerning the past, the present, the future, love, marriage, business, law suits, finance, or health, if you are in trouble, sick, or in love, there's no problem so great she can't solve it."

It's good news, isn't it? "She offers you a guarantee to remove all evil and all bad luck with a holy bath and shower in one visit." And what is the best news of all? She is located on Woodman Avenue in Pacoima. It's amazing to be so close to the source of contentment. By the name, her name is Mrs. White, and if you want her phone number I have it here. I'll tell you something, folks, if she could remove all evil and bad luck with one holy bath and shower, she wouldn't be living on Woodman Avenue in Pacoima because she would be the richest person in the world. Everybody wants contentment. Sorry Mrs. White, we don't buy it.

People seek contentment and typically in the world they assume that contentment is the absence of all problems. That's not the true meaning of contentment because if that's what contentment is no one will ever have it because you can't be completely free from problems. True contentment is being able to be satisfied and content in the midst of any problem. That's the kind of contentment that God offers through Christ. No, the person who has the answers isn't in Pacoima, the person who has the answers is in heaven. God alone can make us content in any situation, and that's what we're learning from the apostle Paul.

Let me read you the text again just to set it in your mind, starting in verse 10. “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. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 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. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction and you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone, for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs, not that I seek the gift itself but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance. I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus.”

Now, we are touching the heart of this great man, Paul. And we are finding that he is a man for all seasons. We are finding that he is a man of contentment. He is a satisfied man. He is a sufficient man. We have noted back in verse 4 that he commanded us to always rejoice. We have noted in verse 6 that he commanded us not to worry or be anxious for anything. And we remember in verse 7 that he introduced us to the peace of God. And in verse 9, he introduced us to the God of peace. Here is a man who knows how to rejoice in every situation. Here is a man who is free from anxiety and worry. Here is a man whose heart is guarded by the peace of God and the God of peace. Here is a man who now tells us that he has learned to be content.

Could there be any more significant theme for our day than contentment? We live in an utterly discontent culture. We are discontent with what we have. We are discontent with what we look like. We are discontent with who we are married to. We are discontent with our lot in life. We are basically discontent with the circumstances and the difficulties that come our way. We are discontent. And we have so much. Here is a man who rejoiced, who was free from worry, who knew a surpassing explicable peace. Here is a man who learned to be content; here is a man who in any and every circumstance found himself sufficient, satisfied. Naturally the question that is immediately posed is: how so? How can we be content? If he learned to be content, can he teach us to be content? He who was the pupil and learned the lesson, can he become the teacher and we the pupil? And I believe the answer is yes. And that’s why we’re looking rather closely at this text, because it outlines for us what I believe to be the elements of contentment.

Remember point one that we made last time? That contentment begins with confidence in God’s providence in verse 10. Contentment begins with a settled confidence in God’s sovereign control of all of the events of life that ultimately are going to reach us for our good. That’s what he was saying

by implication in verse 10, “I rejoiced when your gift came.” He was, you remember, a prisoner in Rome; he was captive there, chained to a Roman soldier, incarcerated in some apartment in the city of Rome. He was a man who therefore had lost his comfort and his freedom. He was subsisting on the bare minimum in terms of the necessities of life. And here the Philippians had sent him a gift, perhaps money, perhaps food, perhaps clothing, perhaps some other amenities that he was in need of. And he is saying: look, it’s fine, I know it didn’t come any sooner because you didn’t have any opportunity to do it any sooner. He is content with the sovereign God who providentially orders opportunities. And there is the baseline element in contentment, that great confidence that God has not forgotten me, that God is attentive to me, that God knows the number of hairs on my head, that God understands everything about my life, maybe even puts my tears in a bottle. God knows my uprising and my down-sitting; He knows my coming and my going. I am the constant focus of His omniscient love and He orders everything in His universe to bring to pass my good. When you believe that, you will experience contentment.

The second thing that the apostle Paul noted as an element of contentment is satisfaction with little. In verse 11 he says, “Not that I speak from want. I have learned on the other hand to be content in whatever circumstances I am.” Here he implies that it was very little that was necessary to satisfy him. If anybody could have said, “I’ve been in great want, very little food, very little subsistence, very great extremities in terms of the incarceration problem,” he could have said, “I have great needs.” Instead he says, “I really don’t speak from want at all.” How can you say that, Paul? Because I assess my life and I say I can be satisfied with very, very little.

And we tried to convey that to you last Lord’s day that we are to be content with food, and clothing and that’s it. And if God provides that, we are to be content. We talked about how we live in a society that breeds discontent; the whole approach of advertising is to make you discontent and it’s very, very effective.

I received a little paper project that one of the little kids in our church did this week, and it came to me. This little girl wrote, “If we have food and covering, there with to be content,” 1 Timothy 6:8 on the front. And I opened it up and all of a sudden the trees started popping up, and she says, “I’m thankful to share my yard with the other kids.” And then, the next page says, “I’m thankful to share my room.” And this is a picture of her bed with two pillows on it which she no doubt shares with someone. “I’m thankful for a little food.” She’s got a little food on her table; it looks like an egg and a box of cereal. And then, “I’m thankful for a few clothes,” she writes, “Dear Pastor, thank you for teaching us to be content. I will remember that God gives us what we need. I will be satisfied with a little bit. And when things go wrong I will remember that God controls my life. Love, Tara.” She got it. It’s right here. That book ought to be published. To be satisfied with little might be the most precious lesson you could teach your children.

The third point we noted last time in our look at this passage is that Paul not only showed confidence in God's providence and demonstrated satisfaction with little; but thirdly, he lived independent from circumstances. Point three is independence from circumstances, and we're just reviewing. In verse 12 he says, "I know how to get along with humble means and how to live in prosperity." At the end of the verse he says, "I can be filled or go hungry, I can have abundance or suffer need." In the middle of the verse, "In any and every circumstance I've learned the secret." I've been initiated into the inside secret of how to be content in any kind of circumstance. It doesn't matter what it is, positive or negative, plus or minus. And, beloved, again that is a component of satisfaction. Satisfaction is not related to what you have. Satisfaction is not related to what you don't have. Satisfaction is related to living above that level and understanding the providence of God, the promises of God and being satisfied with little in this life, anticipating much in the life to come.

Paul moved through life, the gamut of life's experiences being his seemingly daily fare, and always he was content and always he was satisfied. It was okay when things went well. It was okay when they didn't. It was wonderful when he was kissed, and hugged, and extolled, and it was wonderful when he was beaten, and bruised, and battered. Those were not the things that dealt fatal or even devastating blows to his inner man. He trusted in God's provision. He trusted in God's promise. And so, he lived above the circumstances. He could rejoice in anything. He could have peace in anything. He could be free from anxiety in anything. He could maintain a gentle, gracious spirit in anything because he lived beyond the circumstances.

Let me take you to a fourth point this morning. This matter of contentment demands not only a confidence in God's sovereign providence, a satisfaction with little, and an independence of circumstance; but, fourthly, Paul was content because he was sustained by divine power, he was sustained by divine power. And he experienced that. You could even make it, he experienced divine power. Notice verse 13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Some manuscripts say "Christ;" there are manuscripts on both sides of that issue. The better manuscripts seem to use the word "Him," but, of course, it refers to Christ, I'm only saying that because some of your Bibles may say Christ. Whether it says Christ or Him, it's referring to Christ. Paul says I am sustained by Christ who strengthens me.

You see, he had learned that no matter how difficult it was in the material world, there was a spiritual undergirding. And I want to talk about this just a bit this morning. Our adequacy and our sufficiency comes from being attached to the adequate and the sufficient one. We are not really self-sufficient, we are Christ-sufficient. It is because we are linked to His life and linked to His power in us that we have sufficiency. Paul is saying, "Look, I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." What does he mean by that? Well, he means I'm connected to Christ. And because I'm connected to Christ, that is the life of Christ in the soul of man, He lives in me, the life which I live is His life living in me, Galatians 2:20; because of that, I have a supernatural divine strength for every situation.

Now, he does not mean, and I want you to listen carefully to this, he does not mean that I can go forever without eating. He does not mean that I can go forever without drinking, or I can forever without sleeping, or I can be battered with 5,000 stripes and still survive. He does not mean that. He knows that if he doesn't have food eventually, he will die. If he doesn't have something to drink eventually, he will die. And if he is continually pummeled, he will die. There is a limit to the physical extremities which he can endure. I mean, that would be true in any case, obviously. But what he is saying is when I have come to the end of my own resources, then I experience the power of Christ to sustain me until a provision is made.

Now, I believe he is talking here about the material world when he says, "I can do all things." He could have said, "I can endure all things." He uses a Greek verb that means to be strong, or to have strength. He is saying, "I am strong enough to go through anything because of Him who infuses His strength into me." He does not mean that I could live forever with no food. He's not talking about a miraculous provision in that sense. What he is simply saying is in those exigencies of life, those extremities of life where I have no more human resources, I am infused with the strength of Christ. The Bible says, "To him who has no might, He increases strength." And Isaiah says in chapter 40, that great and familiar 31st verse, "That when we would faint and grow weary, we automatically feel the power of God and mount up as wings as eagles." He's talking about coming to the bottom, as it were, of human resources and finding there the strength of Christ.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of this is located at the end of 2 Corinthians. Turn in your Bible to 2 Corinthians chapter 12. And in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul is speaking about his weakness. He says in verse 7, "Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason to keep me from exalting myself." Stop at that point. Paul had received a number of revelations from God, of course. He had had visions of Christ. He had been, remarkably, 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. And so, in order to keep him from exalting himself, verse 7 says, "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh." And he says, "It was a messenger of Satan to buffet me, to keep me from exalting myself." Verse 8, "Concerning this, I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me." And the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." The Lord sent him a very important message. You can be content because there is sufficient grace and sufficient power to take care of you in spite of this problem. In other words, the Lord is saying to him, "I will cast you on Me." You can't deal with this in your own strength; you'll have to depend on Me. Most gladly, he says in verse 9, "Therefore I will rather boast about my weakness." Why? "That the power of Christ may dwell in me." If I didn't have this weakness, I wouldn't be dependent on Him. If I could solve it, I wouldn't need Him. So, it's there for me to be dependent. And in my dependency on Him I see His power manifest. Verse 10, "Therefore I am well," what? "Content." What are you content with? "Weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, difficulties for Christ's sake, for when I am weak then I am strong."

Now, listen to this. He found his contentment in the manifest strength of Christ that comes to the believer when he has exhausted his human resources. Now, let me translate that into what I'm saying: contentment is a byproduct of distress. 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. If you've never been there, maybe you've never experienced it. Paul says, "I'm content, I've seen the power of God." We should be praying, you know, 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.

You know, I've grown in my capability of being contented through the years. And it is a direct result of all of these things but not without this point. 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, at least spiritually, expression of the power of God which tells me that He's involved in my life and therein lies my contentment. I would worry, and fret, and experience anxiety, and a lack of peace, and a certain amount of fear about my sufficiency if I hadn't seen the power of God manifest, wouldn't you? But when I see the power of God manifest in the time of my extremity, when I have no other way to turn, but to cast myself on His strength and say, "Lord, this is a situation I cannot resolve, there are not resources for this, I am dependent on You," I see the power of God move and therein lies my contentment that He is at hand, that He is involved.

And so, confidently says the apostle, "I have the strength to do anything through His strength." This word, "to be strong," the word that is translated, "I can do," is the word that 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's a word of strength; it's a word of power. And Paul is saying, "I have the power to go through all things." By the way, in the Greek, the "all things" is in the emphatic first position. When the Greeks want to lay the emphasis, they put that word first. All things I have the power to endure. And what is he talking about? What do you mean all things? Well, you have to go back in the context, all things is pretty generic if left by itself. And you just go back to 11 and 12 you know what he's talking about: circumstances. He's talking about being filled or going hungry, having abundance of material things, or suffering material need. That's what he's talking about. He's saying, "Look, I have the strength to go through all things, all deprivations, all difficulties in the material world, all times of prosperity," he's talking about the material world. "I have the ability to deal with any kind of material circumstance because of my spiritual strength."

That's what he's saying. 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. See, when you get to the point where you are at the end of your resources and you're dependent on the Lord

and you see the movement of His power, you find contentment.

Look with me for a moment at Ephesians chapter 3. One of my favorite texts in all the Word of God. Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 14, one of the great prayers of the apostle Paul. He says, “I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you.” That’s his opening to his prayer. And then, he launches into the most phenomenal, rich prayer. What are you praying for? “Well, I’m praying that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory,” look at this, “to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.” What Paul experienced he prayed the Ephesians would experience: that inner strength that makes us sufficient, adequate, content in any situation. And the result of that? Verse 20, “Now, to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory.”

Paul is saying, “I’m praying that you’ll be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, and when you’re strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, you are able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all you can ask or think according to that power.” In other words, 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 don’t imagine it can sustain. Sometimes a parent will say to me when they hear about the loss of a child, they’ll say, “I don’t think I could ever endure that, I don’t think I could ever make that. I don’t think I could ever survive that.” And I’ve often said to myself, “I don’t know if I could survive that kind of thing, or the loss of my life partner, some great tragedy. I don’t know if I could survive that.” But I believe that 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 doesn’t work right? It’s a sustaining power. As long as the heart functions properly, they don’t need the pacemaker. If it doesn’t function properly, the pacemaker takes over. There’s a sense in which 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, he 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.” Boy, what a great promise, what a great promise. And that’s the promise 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’s there.

By the way, that latter part, “Him that strengthens me,” needs to be looked at briefly. The word “strengthens,” *endunamo*, to put power in, it means to infuse with strength. And that’s what the Lord does. The Lord infuses us with strength. He puts it in us when we are at our extremities.

Beloved, this is what brings contentment. When you have learned not to depend upon your own resources, but when you've been to the desert, when you've been to the valley, when you've been to the extremity, when you've stood in the valley of the shadow of death, you've been on the brink, you can't resolve your problems, you can't eliminate the conflict, you can't solve the marriage, you can't do anything about the kids, you can't change the environment at work that you're involved in, you have no way that you can deal with the disease that's wracking your body and you come to the point where you are out of resources, you turn to God, you find the strength that is there to go through this situation. And in that, lies your experience of contentment.

Now, having said all of that, I must say this. Somebody will say to me, "Well, you know, I've been to the end of myself, I've been to the end of my rope, I've come to the limit of all of my resources and I didn't find anything there to comfort me. I wasn't content, and I'm not content." Let me tell you 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, now listen carefully, in the will of God. Let me tell you what I mean. If you've been living a life of sin, and you're now at the bottom of the pit where sin has led you, don't 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.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in writing his book on spiritual depression, of course he was a medical doctor, he was a physician to the queen before he felt the call of God to preach and teach the Word of God. And he suggested that this matter of looking at God's power coming into action at the end of our resources was similar to the issue of health. He put it this way. He said, "Health is something that results from right living. Health cannot be obtained directly or immediately or in and of itself. There is a sense in which I am prepared to say that a man should not think of his health as such at all. Health is the result of right living. And I say exactly the same thing about this question of power in our Christian lives."

What he is simply saying is that health is the end product of living right. May I express to you that the power of God that brings contentment is the end of right living spiritually. He uses this illustration. He says, "Take the question of preaching. No subject is discussed more often than power in preaching. 'O that I might have power in preaching,' says the preacher, and he goes on his knees and he prays for power. I think that may be quite wrong. It certainly is if it's the only thing the preacher does. The way to have power is to prepare your message carefully. Study the Word of God, think it out, analyze it, put it in order, do your utmost. That is the message God is most likely to bless, the indirect approach rather than the direct. It is exactly the same in this matter of power to live the Christian life. In addition to our prayer for power, we must obey certain primary rules and laws. The secret of power is to discover and to learn from the New Testament what is possible for us in Christ. What I have to do is go to Christ, I must spend my time with Him, I must meditate upon Him, I must get to know Him. I must practice the Christian life. I must do what He tells me. I must read the Bible. I must live the

Christian life in all its fullness." End quote.

Now, what he is saying is obvious: 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've been living right. You see, the problem we have today is we have all these people, quote-unquote, "Christians" who are living sinful wicked unfaithful lives. Then, they have problems. And 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. And they've never dealt with the real issue. Listen, you can't get the power of God from a counselor, you can't get the power of God from a therapist, you can't get the power of God from some formula, you can't just change your entire life, experience the fullness of the power of God and contentment if you've been living a sinful pattern. There's no quick fix.

Paul says, "Look, 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." And so, you see, people who run off to get somebody to fix them, one, probably don't understand the power of Christ; two, may not know the power of Christ because this is the product of their own sin. Sometimes it's not the product of their own sin; sometimes they need biblical instruction, biblical encouragement, biblical counsel and help. But many, many people are looking for a quick fix of a pattern of sin that has led them to a result they can't resolve, that never will be resolved until they begin to live an obedient life.

Let me give you a classic illustration, and I get these all the time. But here's a letter that came a couple of days ago to my desk. "Dear John, I cheated on my husband, second marriage, for about 11 years, ever since we had been married. This consisted of several short-term affairs, a couple of long-term affairs, a few one-night stands, and some miscellaneous messing around, probably 12 to 15 men in all. I basically loved my husband, but I knew that I was not 100 percent committed to him, obviously, but had no idea how to change that. I was a miserable and lost soul. I had no sense of self-worth, was very moody, discontented and shopped a lot, and bought a lot of things to try to satisfy my emptiness. I'm a very adept liar, and I manage to deceive my husband as well as everyone else. I was still able to function pretty well most of the time in spite of all this, and most people actually thought I was a good person because I hid the bad side of me so well. I put on a very good front for most of the world to see, but I felt like I had on a mask all the time. If anyone ever told me I was attractive, I would say to myself, if you could only see what's inside of me you wouldn't say that. I guess I should also mention I had an abortion, a baby conceived by my second husband while I was still married to my first. We separated. I had the abortion then married my present husband a year and a half later after living with him most of the time. Anyway, because of recurring depression I went for counseling. Three years ago I went for counseling for two years. I think I better understand some of my reasons for doing the things I did because of this but in no way did I change. My background is that of a Christian home. In fact, my father was a minister and I accepted Christ. I really never understood what it was to follow Christ, I went through a lot of the motions as I was growing up but it

didn’t mean much to me. As soon as I left home to go to college, I rejected everything, went on my merry way. My heart was very cold to the things of God and I’m sure Satan was happy to oblige by hardening it even more.”

She says, “Maybe two or three times in my deepest depression and despair I cried to God to help me, but I didn’t bother to say I was sorry for what I was doing. And since I never heard from Him, I was totally convinced He hated me and didn’t ever want to have anything to do with me again. This added to my misery and feeling of worthlessness.” Then, this, “I’m living proof of the Holy Spirit’s power to transform a person’s heart and behavior. Not all convictions for a changed life came at once. It’s been a gradual process for certain things.” She mentions things like giving in church and things like that. “But one thing did change immediately because I believed God knew it was most important to me: the thought of ever being with another man simply abhors me. Then, after a very short time I stopped and realized that I was committed to my unsaved husband and my marriage 100 percent, and that I loved him with all my heart and would never do anything again to dishonor him. This was not something I had specifically asked for, it just happened. I had a deep feeling of joy and contentment, a word I thought I would never know the meaning of in my lifetime.”

Well, how do you experience the sustaining power of God and contentment? It is the result of what? Of obedience. How do you expect to have contentment if you’re hopping in and out of bed with everyone and live that kind of lifestyle? Of course you’ll be a miserable person. God only knows when this girl was truly saved, but it doesn’t change the point that the sustaining power and contentment of God is provided to the one who in an obedient life has come to the end of his resources. Therein is the sufficiency that brings contentment.

How can you know contentment? 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. There’s one other point and I’m going to explain it next week, but I’m going to give it to you this morning. Here’s the fifth point, the fifth factor in contentment: concern for the well-being of others, concern for the well-being of others. If you spend your whole life worrying about you, you’ll probably never be content. As soon as you cease to be concerned about you and become lost in concern for others, you will experience contentment. The reason Paul was so content in any situation was that he was never the issue to himself. Verse 17 will give you the idea. He says, “Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.” What a great statement. He says, “Now, you sent me that gift to meet my needs, not that I needed the gift, I’m rejoicing not because I got the gift but because you gave it. What do you mean? Well, it will profit to your account. What does that mean? We gave the money away, that doesn’t profit our account. No, no, he’s not talking materially, he’s talking what? Spiritually. What he is saying is you’re going to know the blessing of God. In fact, he says it in verse 19. “My God is going to supply,” what? “All your needs.” You see, what makes me happy is not that I’ve got the gift, but that you got the blessing when you gave it. There’s a man who is more concerned that the Philippians be blessed than that he be

blessed, more concerned that they receive the benediction of God than that he have his needs met. That is so basic to contentment, to be concerned about others more than ourselves.

We’re going to dig into that point in the few verses remaining in this text next Sunday, and I’m also going to talk about the principles that unfold here for giving. It’s a tremendous passage that culminates in that great 19th verse, “My God shall supply all your needs.” But we’ll have to wait until next time.

Father, thank You for our time this morning. What a joy to worship and praise You together, again for the instruction that You have granted us in Your Word. We thank You. We pray that we might experience the contentment that comes to those who trust, those who are satisfied with little, those who live above the circumstances, those who are sustained by Your power as a result of an obedient life, those who are more concerned with others than with self. May we know that contentment. Thank You for such a gift. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).