

BE: Be Content
Philippians 4:10-20

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Text Introduction: In our ONE Day service (on August 31) and beyond, I will issue the challenge to “Do Something” for God that you have never done. At the same time that we ask this question, we will ask God as a church collectively to unify us around one thing that we can do together that we have never done before in the history of our church.

I sense that this could be a very exciting time for us as a church. I believe that this is the kind of challenge that will help us to grow as Jesus’ disciples and help us to grow in our relationships with one another. However, I want to make something clear. We cannot do something just to do something. We could be so busy doing things that we forget that Jesus calls us to a relationship of being. So, I am using these Sundays leading up to our ONE Day celebration thinking about who we are to be. As we have said, “Being Precedes Doing!” We have talked about “Being Holy” and “Being Jesus’ disciple.” Today, we talk about “Being Content.”

Text: I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I don’t say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³ I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Still, you did well by sharing with me in my hardship.

¹⁵ And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account. ¹⁸ But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Introduction: In the span of these eleven verses are three of what are for many among the most loved Scriptures and most often quoted Scriptures of the entire Bible. The verses are 12, 13, and 19. Though encouraging and helpful in lots of applications and situations of life, we certainly strive to understand these verses as first written by Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Paul is doing several things in this closing. First, He is honestly thanking them for the gift they have sent. Secondly, he is telling them that he is ok; they do not need to do anything else. But, thirdly, he is still teaching. He has learned something. Maybe it is even a new lesson for Paul, and he wants his friends to know (to learn) what he has learned.

As we continue to focus on this idea of being, I want to share with you some things about being content. Doing something more will not make you more content.

A Couple of Introductory Truths about Contentment:

Before Christ, contentment eludes us.

Now, this part is not a new lesson for Paul, but it is necessary for us to restate that lesson here this morning, because it is so vital to learning about contentment. Paul gave earlier in this letter his personal testimony about his former (his before Christ) life.

Philippians 3:4-6—although I once also had confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless.

There are stories from every generation in history that affirm that a life without God breeds discontentment, yet still today there are many who choose to go their way without Christ—searching, but never finding “what they’re looking for.”

In Christ, contentment is not automatic.

This might surprise you, but many Christians still are searching for contentment—maybe some of you.

Encouraging Words about Finding Contentment:

God desires for me to be content.

The word that Paul used here was used in the first century by the godless, pagan Stoics. They believed and taught that contentment came by becoming entirely self-sufficient. They believed that contentment came when a person became absolutely independent of all things. So, they taught their followers to eliminate all desire so that each one would say, “I don’t want.” When they arrived at that place, they would be content. They taught their followers to eliminate all emotion so that each one would say, “I don’t care.” When they arrived at that place, they believed that there they would find contentment.

The contentment that Paul spoke of is nothing like that kind of contentment. Instead, Paul taught that contentment was found not in our self-reliance, but in a God-reliance.

Contentment can be learned.

So, it is not about my circumstances. Paul learned in wealth and in poverty. In all circumstances, contentment has to be learned. If you are not content this morning, there is hope. You can learn to be content.

The road to contentment is in discontentment.

If you are not content this morning, you might be learning what it means to be content through your discontentment. In fact, your discontentment might be the very thing leading you to contentment.

There really is a secret to contentment.

The secret is in verse 13. The secret is Christ.

So What?

Just give me Jesus!

I love the song that simply says:

In the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise give me Jesus.

When I am alone, when I am alone, when I am alone, give me Jesus.

When I come to die, when I come to die, when I come to die, give me Jesus.

Chorus: Give me Jesus, Give me Jesus, Give me Jesus, You can have all this world, just give me Jesus.

Warren Wiersbe wrote a commentary on most every book of the Bible (maybe all). He titled his books all "Be..." In examining this passage, Wiersbe gave this outline:

In Christ...

- I can accept all things.
- I can do all things.
- I have all things.

Conclusion: There is one thing that ought to leave you with feelings of discontent. If you are in sin, I pray you are discontent in that sin.