

## Sermon Discussion

### 30 August 2020

Read Philippians 4:10-20 together.

#### Dig Deeper

Paul did not beg God's people to help him in his work. He just placed the need before them and trusted God to meet it. Too, he had learned the lesson of contentment. Changing circumstances did not affect the inner contentment he enjoyed.

The word **content** (*autarkēs*) means "self-sufficient." The Stoics used this word (which occurs only here in the NT) to mean human self-reliance and fortitude, a calm acceptance of life's pressures. But Paul used it to refer to a divinely bestowed sufficiency, **whatever the circumstances**.

At times Paul experienced definite financial and material needs, and at other times he had an abundance (v. 12). He learned how to cope with both need and plenty. The words **I have learned the secret** translate *memyēmai* (from *myēō*, which occurs only here in the New Testament). In the mystery religions it was a technical term meaning "to initiate (into the mysteries)." Paul used it here to suggest a kind of "initiation" (by his experiences) into being content when **either well fed or hungry, and either in plenty or in want**.

Paul said he could **do everything**- including handling poverty and living in abundance- **through Him who gave him strength**. This was not an expression of pride in his own abilities, but a declaration of the strength provided by Christ.

1. In verses 10-13, what is Paul rejoicing in?
2. Many people think of Philippians as a thank you letter. Yet Paul never thanks the Philippians for their partnership with them. Here he says he "rejoiced in the Lord" for their concern. What does that tell you about Paul's perspective on their financial help?
3. Why would it be significant for the Philippians to know that Paul is not rejoicing because they alleviated his need? (Hint: revisit the question "What is he specifically rejoicing for?")
4. What is Paul's secret to contentment and strength? How does this work? How do v. 4-9 relate to Paul's contentment?
5. If contentment is a virtue, what is its corresponding sin? Read Philippians 4:12; 1 Timothy 6:5b-10; Hebrews 13:5.

6. What keeps us from feeling the contentment that Paul felt? When do you live as though God were not meeting “all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus”?

### **Application & Prayer**

- This series is designed to encourage us to spend time reading the Bible. How has this sermon encouraged you to spend more time in the Bible? What one thing can you do differently this week?
- Write out Philippians 4:13 on a notecard or piece of paper and place it somewhere you will see it every day. Pray that God would give you His strength to be content in Him.
- Who are there people for whom you feel concern? Are there people you have partnered with to provide for their needs over me? If not what has kept you from generosity? Pray that God may make those opportunities clear.