

In chapter 1 Paul said

- to let your conduct be worthy of the gospel.
- He said, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

He taught on unity thru humility in chapter 2.

- He also said we should do all things
- without complaining or disputing.

In chapter 3 he encouraged the believers to press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

And in chapter 4 he encouraged the church.

- to remain settled in the Lord and be anxious for nothing.

Paul never claimed to be the victim of circumstance,

He never wavered in his commitment to the cause of the gospel.

People today are often like thermometers.

- Their life is dictated by their circumstances

When things are going well in their life,

- they're praising the Lord.

And when things aren't going so well in their life,

- they're down,

Then there are others like Paul, more like a thermostat.

- You learn how to regulate your surroundings.

When things become difficult in your life,

- You trust the Lord.
- You don't waver.

You're not blown and tossed as the waves of the sea.

Are you a thermometer or a thermostat?

Are you up and down depending on your circumstances, or are you steady when challenges come your way?

In fact, he said in Phil 4:11 "I have learned to be content,"

Phil 4:12, "I know how to abound"

Phil 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Phil 4:18, "I have all and abound."

Phil 4:10-20

10 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.

10 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.

Ten years had passed since the startup of the church in Philippi.

- Paul had been back to Philippi at least once according to acts 20.

The church of Philippi once supported Paul but had stopped the support for reasons unknown.

Eventually they sent him support again thru Epaphroditus.

Paul rejoiced in their support

- and said their care for him flourished.

“Flourish” - to revive again or to renew. The idea is to sprout up or shoot up.

Ezekiel prophesied of the Messiah sprouting up and His people flourishing if you will.

Flourishing was a picture of a barren tree

- changing from winter-time to spring time.

In Ezekiel 17 the Jews were guilty of trusting in this world rather than God.

No powerful world leader can bring peace and prosperity to this world.

So Ezekiel wrote a parable about a special branch that God Himself will plant.

Ezekiel 17 reads as follows:

Ezek 17:22-24

22 Thus says the Lord God: "I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one,

and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain. 23 On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; (The Messiah would come from the line of David's descendants)

(Ezekiel was prophesying of the coming Messianic Kingdom of Christ)

and it will bring forth boughs (branches), and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell.

(Every person that gives their life to Christ will experience His peace for all of eternity)

24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the Lord, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the Lord, have spoken and have done it."

Note the significant statement that closes this parable.

- God Himself would plant a special branch, the Messiah (v.24).

When God plants the Messiah on the mountain heights of Israel,

- all people will know that the LORD is the only living and true God.

Therefore, you and I can rejoice in Him and in His coming.

Paul rejoiced when he received support from the church of Philippi again.

In those days,

- prisoners were not cared for by the state.
- Support came from friends and family

I believe Paul rejoiced simply because he knew that someone genuinely cared for him,

- that's what brought him joy.

In fact, he says, "though you surely did care" or you have revived your care for me.

The Greek word for care is "phroneō" and it means to regard highly or to think much of.

Paul used this word in appreciation of the church

- knowing they thought very highly of him,

- it showed in their support of him.

In Rom 14:6, Paul said,

6 Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him.

We “phroneō” Him, we regard Him highly or we think much of Him.

Paul said in verse 10, “you lacked opportunity”

- he was referring to an opportune time.

The Philippians came thru at the right time,

- the appropriate time.

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.

Notice the subject of these two verses is contentment.

He said, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content, Autárkes - to be self-sufficient or contained.

I believe Paul was saying, hey, if people help me great,

- I’ll take that as God’s provision.

However, if people don’t help me

- then God will provide by some other means.
- And I’ll still be satisfied.

There is a difference between my needs and my wants.

The idea is not being content in what we have,

- but the idea is being content in whom we have.

When I’m content in whom I have, “Christ”

- then I’ll be content in the circumstances
- which exist around me.

Job 1:21

“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.”

Is that our attitude and our response to the Lord!

Paul said, I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

The verb "learned" means "learned by experience."

Paul's spiritual contentment was something he learned, not earned.

Paul himself had to go through many difficult experiences in life

- in order to learn how to be content

The Psalmist said in chapter 23, the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (I will be fully satisfied)

Heb 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?"

So our contentment isn't in what we have, it's in whom we have.

Paul also said that he knew how to be abased and how to abound.

In other words,

- I've learned how to live on almost nothing or with everything.

Paul continued, "Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry,"

To be full was used of the feeding and fattening of animals.

- Paul knew what it was to be full.

He also knew what it was to have little.

- He wrote this letter from jail.

Here was Paul a person once of status, now he's lost everything.

And sometimes those who have lost everything

- give up on life because their dependency
- is in this world's system.

6

It's like Paul said in verse 12, I know how to be abased, I know how to abound.

The NL says, I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything.

Jesus said in Luke 12 that one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.

Learn to be content and don't covet what others have or you'll be dissatisfied with what you have.

Phil 4:13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

This verse is encouraging when we're going thru something difficult

The assumption is that Paul's statement promises

- that we can accomplish anything
- we set out to do because Christ will strengthen us.

The bible does affirm that God

- has the ability to do anything He pleases
- Matt 19:26, Mark 9:23, Job 42:2, Jer 32:17,
- But this isn't Paul's point in this verse.

This verse is actually a side note to Paul's main point in verses 10-12

- which are Paul's thankfulness for their support.

Paul was thankful even before they provided support.

He said earlier in chapter 1, "to live is Christ and to die is gain."

So knowing Christ brings joy which is the theme of this letter.

Being content in Christ is what gives the believer a peace that surpasses all understanding Phil 4:7.

Verse 13 it's not a promise of future success,

- but one of present sufficiency in Christ.

Are you relying on self or on your Savior!

Corey Ten Boom once said, "You'll never know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have!"