

Contentment in Christ

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Well, this day is a special Sunday because we are celebrating Mother's Day here at Calvary Road Baptist Church. And to every mother and grandmother, adopted mother, spiritual mother amongst us, we want you to know that we honor you, that we thank God for you, but more importantly, we praise God to what he is doing through you, and we pray God that he will continue to strengthen you by his grace. and recognize that any love or care sacrifice seen in your families is God actively pouring his love through your lives and motherhood is a high calling. Never forget that.

Never forget that God has given you this special privilege in this life to take this role to take it in a way that you know that he's never left you alone that he is equipper. He equips you in the call that he has called you to always remember that he'll always give you what you need to sustain you through the sleepless nights. I've seen that personally the difficult seasons and all the sacrificial love that you pour out to your family. It is God who gives you the grace to nurture the next generation, your own children. Some of them are already adults. And it's by your influence in their lives if you are a Christian that you have as Proverbs 22:6, you have trained them while they were young so that they will not depart from it. That is God's word and that's our anchor and that's your anchor as a mother.

It is God who gives you the grace to nurture again the next generation. And why do we want to make this emphasis as a special day for you when others diminish motherhood and say take a career instead as a church body this is no that the priority is motherhood. The career comes secondary. God will bless you if you put your priorities right according to way that God designed you not how the world designed you. Because in this divine design that God has put into motherhood, God gives us a beautiful glimpse of his relentless care for his own children, that's us as he is our father to his own children, us as child of God. It's a picture in motherhood. And this theme of God's care and sustaining strength leads us perfectly to the text that I'll be preaching from. We've been going through the book of Philippians. And the text that we're going to go through will touch on the lives of mothers if not everyone else in this room as well. So if you will go ahead and turn in the book of Philippians and we're going to be in chapter 4 and beginning in verse 10 and through verse 14.

See many of you mothers have lived Philippians 4 10-14 more deeply than you realize. These are reminders that he has cared for you when you were exhausted. He was the one that loved you when you felt empty. He was the one that gave you, given you when no one saw you, he was paying attention. He's the one that helped you to endure seasons of abasement as well as abounding. He is also the one that has given you the ability to learn contentment in Christ through sleepless nights, difficult seasons, and sacrificial love. The truth is, you didn't do it in your own strength. If you're a believer in Christ this morning, God did that in you. God revived your care. God strengthened your heart. God sustained your spirit. And ultimately, God taught you this word contentment. He taught you how to be contentment in the hidden places of your motherhood. And so this morning, we're going to look deeply at a subject that touches every single one of us, and it's the word contentment.

That is the subject of the text this morning. Why is it you think right? Why this word is so important? Why is it so important is because in this world of sub of immense abundance particularly here and where we live we have abundance more than anywhere else in the world. And yet with the immense abundance that we have why is it that we often played by restlessness? Why is it that this world still feels restless in knowing that we have more than anything that we could ever need or want or even desire? Why do our hearts constantly chase the next milestone, the next purchase, the next season of life, believing that then you will finally be satisfied?

The answer is simply this. Discontentment is the normal setting for all humans. It is the normal setting. Left to our own devices, we constantly look at our external circumstances. The next thing, the next thing, the next thing, dictating your internal peace. But God desires to set us free from that exhausting treadmill. Amen. He wants us to understand that true contentment according to his word isn't a goal we achieve through our own striving. Rather, it is a gift bestowed upon us by God himself who orchestrates within us the inner peace. Not orchestrating the external to give you peace. He wants us to see his hand in every season so that we respond to his grace with a deep unshakable peace.

And let's look at how God brings this about in the life of the Apostle Paul and how he is doing the same for us as brothers and sisters in Christ today. So if you will please stand out of respect of God's word and please follow along with me silently as I read from Philippians chapter 4 beginning in verse 10-14.

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want. For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do

all things to Christ which strengthenth me. Notwithstanding, ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction.

You may be seated. This is God's word.

Let us go to verse 10 and we're going to go through this where the emphasis is needed. Look at particularly in the first part. The word but is a transitional word. It is referring to what has happened in the previous verse. And he says that all the things that I mentioned in the last verse. Remember this. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly. In the Lord. We see that phrase repeated over and over and over again. That we find everything that we need in the Lord, including rejoicing. Rejoicing is a big part of this theme of Philippians. We see that even despite of Paul being in a prison cell for the sake of preaching the gospel that he can be full of joy that he can remind himself in the Lord to rejoice always. And that was a command we saw in a previous sermon in the previous text. But here he says now something different. says you see there in the text that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again. So that means that this flourishing has happened before now it's happening again here in this part of the text and he says wherein you were also careful but he lacked opportunity. I want us to just unfold that word rejoice. Think for a moment what he could have rejoiced. He could have rejoiced in money as many people in the world do. He could have rejoiced in having relief that this is, by the way, a financial gift offering to Paul.

He could have rejoiced in that offering. He could have rejoiced in the comfort that he knows that people are going to take care of him. And despite of that, he doesn't say any of that. He says, I rejoice in the Lord. In the Lord. And this is a pastoral heart to share that whatever experience we go through in this life that we are to find everything that we need when it comes to joy in the Lord. We are supposed to find our contentment. We're going to find out as well in the Lord because God himself is the one that flourishes us. That word flourish literally means to be revived. As Christians, we constantly need to be revived because we still live in this world and the life to come. And you typically this life is the one that we need to constantly put our focus off and focus our attention on the things of the Lord. And so he says here you have flourished. You have revived again in supporting me. Philippians and that's the word careful that they thought about his concerns. They might have been really busy in the activities of the church and they might have forgotten about Paul who was in prison for preaching the gospel and God put that thought into their heart. Hey, think about Paul. Remember Paul? Remember the man that brought the gospel to you and planted this church in Philippi? And he says, Be careful. Be concerned. And then here Paul makes a turn in his letter to address the likely occasion to him to write it. He wants to write a thank you letter. He is speaking. And by the way, this is the way that we should receive giving and we should respond to giving. This is this is the also a sub set of the theme of this passage. How to receive a gift and how to respond.

And so here again receiving this financial gift from the Philippians sent to him by most likely Ephroditis. The word care here is the theme word for forno. Remember we've been touching on this word forno. It means the mind of Christ. So the idea that they were giving this financial gift came out of the mind of Christ. this idea of being generous despite of their financial difficulties. They were giving out of that. And so they took concern over Paul because Paul his care was on the Lord and they also was on the Lord and they're on the same page when it came to how to take care of his people. And so Paul recognized that this gift came directly from the Lord. That's what it says in the Lord. and his joy in receiving it was from the same source as the Philippians were giving and as Paul was receiving was by the work of the Lord. So Paul acknowledges that they were concerned before but they lacked opportunity.

You see that in the text they lacked the opportunity. Why did they lack the opportunity you may ask? Perhaps they had no one to send. Perhaps Ephroditis was somewhere else. He was possibly sick. remember that passage where he was sick oftentimes and he couldn't be the carrier. He might have been the only one. We don't we're not sure in the text, but we know kind of the situation that it was difficult to travel the distance cuz he was a thousand plus miles away from the church of Philippi. That's a quite a distance. This is before cars, right? Before trains and planes. So, it was a long journey. It took a lot of risk. But you know their love was more than about their risk. Amen. And we saw that in a previous sermon. Their love was beyond their risk. And so he adds that he knew that they had always had the will. That's what it meant. They had they were thinking about the opportunity, but they lacked in that opportunity.

And so what had hindered them, we do not specifically know. But what Paul is essentially saying here in this text is you chose a mindset of care toward me. You did that and it was God that brought about this truth in them that awakened this care within their souls.

Just think about comparing to a tree but budding. This is an analogy by a preacher. I think it's quite worthy of an illustration. Think of a tree budding again in spring. Who makes the tree bud? Is it the tree itself? No. It's God, right? God is the only one that can make that tree bud and grow into a mighty tree. It's the same thing here in a sense with Christian love that our love has to be revived by him and him alone. We can't force that love upon us. We have to ask God revive that love for the brethren and do that constantly in our lives because we are prone to not love right not the kind of love that God gives which is agape love and just as God ordains the wind the winters as well as the springs there are times as you know in winter it's very difficult to communicate isn't it because we're sheltered we're thinking about just to stay in safety and many times we forget about planning. When we're in the midst of a storm, I often say this phrase, you cannot perform and plan at the same time. You have to wait when the opportunity comes where you're undistracted, where you can focus on the things of God. And sometimes God puts us in

those situations to actually trust in him, to be anchored in him while we're in the storm. So, it's never a bad thing, but it's a timing. I want us to focus our attention on the timing and what is the source of the timing. See, God helps and ordains the opening of the spring just as the winter season and how the sap rises and the buds flourish in springtime. And God is the one who brings the seasons of support and other times seasons of waiting. This is what sowing and reaping principle is it isn't it? There are times of waiting we have to wait and there are times when there's harvest and we have to understand that as the way God not only did this in the physical world but also spiritually and why does this matter is that as believers we often feel guilty when we think that we haven't cared enough. You ever felt that way? like, Oh, I could have just done so much more. I just had the opportunity to do so. And that here in this text should be an encouragement that yes, even the Philippians had this that I didn't have enough mindset of I lack this opportunity to give.

So, it should be an encouragement not as a guilt because again, God determines the seasons of our lives. He is the one that revives the care at the right time. That's the mystery we can't understand fully and we should that's where faith takes over. We trust in God's timing. Amen. And we often try to force again a relationship and we force support when it's not the right timing. And that takes discernment by God's grace because God is the one that cultivates the care in the hearts of his people. And when people help you, you should recognize it was God's hand when that opportunity came. It was God's hand. And when there's a delay, trust God also that he's managing a season of waiting for you. So instead of asking, Am I caring enough? Instead, instead of focusing on yourself, right? Am I caring enough? Reorient and ask this question. Lord, revive your care in me again. That's a better way to phrase it. Revive the care in me. Again, we need it to come from God, not from ourselves. It's often a reminder for me as a pastor. And I want things to happen so quickly.

And the Lord reminds me, be patient by praying, by waiting for the right timing. And for every individual, if you're in a family setting, in a home setting, there's times where you have to wait upon God. It might be shaky right now in your own home. You might be going through a storm. But maybe it's an opportunity to wait upon the Lord to build that patience of waiting for his timing. And then when the season comes, you can truly have rejoicing in the right kind of way. There's a kind of rejoicing that happens when you wait on things. Amen. When you do it too quickly, that joy is kind of it doesn't feel right. And it's probably because the timing was not according to his timetable. And so often we try to again force that time and we just got to wait for God to cultivate that kind of care in our hearts.

So verse 11, let's look at verse 11, Paul writes, Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. Paul is quick to clarify

here in this part of the text that he had no expectation or expressed need of supporting or needing support. That's where he mentions in the first part that I speak of want. I don't speak respect of want. He said, and why does he say it this way? It's almost like he's saying, Thank you, but no thank you. I don't I'm not wanting of this. That it almost sounds like that, but that's not what he's saying. Rather, God had taught him. You see that? He had taught him to be content in whatever circumstances he found himself in. You see, being content has to be learned. Let me repeat that. Contentment has to be learned because a default setting is discontentment. And I love that Paul writes at that. He says, I have learned. It's something we have to learn. And we have to learn it repeatedly, don't we? We have to learn to be content repeatedly because our natural inclination is to always feel discontent. And so to be content, this is what it literally means. It means having enough. Is that where you are right now? That even right now in this moment in your life that you have enough. You see, when we became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we knew once and for all that Jesus Christ is enough. That he satisfies our souls, our deepest souls longing, and that we find all of our contentment in him. That's the ultimate contentment. Amen.

And so, anything extra or whatever downfall comes in, we have enough in Christ. And that's why we can rejoice all the time because we're not basing our lives on circumstances anymore. He has stopped once and for all the pleasures of external circumstances and he has worked in our inner man instead. This is what Paul talks about in 1 Timothy 6:6. He says, But godliness with contentment is great gain. So what is that word godliness? It means a god centered focus on character on faith and in trust in him. Rather than just pursuing earthly riches, you are now pursuing a Christlike nature. That's your pursuit. Your ultimate pursuits is to become more Christlike. He's put that in your heart. Brothers and sisters in Christ, he's also put contentment. He says there with contentment that's the inner satisfaction not external satisfaction and joy with your current circumstances. Can you say that through the basing and the abounding that you can be content in all circumstances? Because that's what contentment means that he is enough. That you're relying on God's provisions rather than craving more of the things of this world. That's what Philippians 11 is addressing. And then this word great gain, it describes as true lasting profit. Yes, it's a financial word that you have wealth in your soul already. You already have a great gain. You don't have to wait for the next stock market to go up. You don't have to wait for the next great opportunity to buy a big purchase. That's no longer the thing that motivates your heart. You already have the greatest wealth in your soul already with godliness, with contentment, and that's what brings you ultimate peace, ultimate security. It's what anchors you that your results is in the richer and more peaceful life that's found in his word rather than financial gain. That's the amazing truth. So contentment is a miracle of God's grace. You see this, you think about this and you're going, No way this can happen. You're right. Only by God's grace can you have this kind

of life. And when you do thank God for this life, this is what praise mean. You thank God for what he has done in your life. And when he has done these kind of things, you can praise him and you can rejoice always as Paul says. When God gives you a heart of contentment, contentment is a God-given virtue. It's never from ourselves. Let me illustrate this by what it looks like. And it's the word self-control. It's one of the fruit of the spirit. It's one of the last ones. And what does it look like to have self-control that God gives to you? It looks like God sustaining you. Another preacher that I used for this part of illustration, he uses it as a compensation pendulum. Like what is a compensation pendulum, you may ask?

It's found in those clocks that you see out there. There's one at PCC Pas City College. It's a tower clock. Those clocks have what's called a pendulum compensation pendulum. And what it is is that it is the most reliable and the most accurate precise thing to measure time is what's called a compensation pendulum. Even observatory clocks use this that's the way by the way if you want to know the most accurate time just go to and look at an observatory clock and that's the correct time. So God in a way installs this compensation pendulum within each believer's soul. And what does that mean? He corrects the expansions of a pendulum and the contraction. So the pendulum is the prosperity and the contractions are poverty. Abasement and abounding keeping perfect time in any circumstances and anywhere. That's what God does. He puts his timing in your soul. And we just have to yield, Lord, asking, Lord, is this the right timing for this or am I taking a step too far or too quickly? Lord, help me to trust in your timing. You put that in me, in my soul. That word contentment. You're enough. You're enough. And if this is what you want for me, then thank you, Lord. This is part of being enough. I don't need this to have a greater gain. I already have that. I just want to know if this is your will and your purpose in my life. And it's also like a ship where at the command center, the man, the captain has a strong hand. Whenever a strong wind comes and whenever the wind is contrary that moves the boat in a certain direction, you know that this is taking you off base, right? So he also gives the ability to have a heart that is constantly orienting to the things of God. Just like that sailor when the wind blows, you know, okay, this is pushing me away from the will of God. I need to get back to the will of God. And he gives you the strength to come back to orient. And unless that wind came, that strong storm came, those circumstances came, you wouldn't have known if you were off base, right? Many times people that go adrift is because there's no wind. and you're just going cruising along and you have no idea the sense of direction until strong wind blows and you know okay now I know where to turn. So think of it that way. Whenever God is sending you a storm in your life is so that you can reorient yourself to the will of God. Not be chased by every storm and every opportunity. See Paul experienced this in many ways in his suffering for the sake of the gospel. And we see this found in 2 Corinthians 11 23-27. These are the storms that he experienced so that he can stay within the will of God. Frequent

imprisonments, five lashes and three times beaten with rods. Once he was stoned, shipwrecks, hunger and thirst, fastings often, coldness, nakedness, dangers of waters, of robbers, own countrymen, heathen in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren, weariness and painfulness, all of these, by the way, mentioning external things. And then he talks about internal conflict that he has daily concerning all the churches that he planted. Wow. How many times did he have to reorient himself to God's will? All of those could have swept him and he would have been shipwrecked. And yet God gave him the strength to endure all those experiences. And he's doing that in each of your lives, brothers and sisters, in Christ.

God is teaching you contentment. He is teaching you contentment through the sufferings. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says it best, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Whenever we're suffering, we feel weak, don't we? But in those sufferings, that's the time that God can pour his strength into your life by his grace. And it's the power of Christ that rest upon you. Many believers think contentment is something they must produce. And again, I want us to reorder ourselves to the word of God because Paul shows us contentment is something God forms in us through life circumstances that we would never choose. We would never choose it, right? To experience suffering unnecessarily, maybe. But you see, it's God that chooses the circumstances in your life, not you. And if you're going through some suffering, again, this is suffering for the for Christ's sake, not suffering for sin. Let me be clear on that. If you're suffering for Christ, he is putting these circumstances in your life so that he can draw you closer to him. You see, he shares with you during times of weakness, the gospel of Christ, that you have the treasure above everything else, the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will remind you of the gospel. I've often times when I'm in my weakness, God reminds me of the gospel. He reminds me of what Christ has done in my life. paying for all of my sin, paying for all the disobedience, all of the guilt that is attached to those sins. And he reminds me, be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I am God.

And that passage, by the way, continues that he has control over the heathens and of the world. That's why you can be still in God. You can see because when you are preaching the gospel and living the gospel, you will experience real suffering. You cannot take separate suffering from the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are preaching the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, I'm not talking about the prosperity gospel. I'm talking about the true gospel of Christ. There will be real suffering because the world hates to be told what to do to be corrected for their sins. But thank God he has changed our hearts to receive that. And we need we want other people to receive that correction because it's a benefit for eternal life. You see, the devil takes away the eternal things of life and just makes you focus on the temporal things of life. Be careful of that. because

that's not where contentment lies in the temporal things. It's always on the eternal things and that's where our power lies is in the eternal son of God. So instead of praying, Lord, change my circumstances, we ought to pray in this way, Lord, teach me contentment in this circumstance, in that circumstance, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Pray in that way. Pray in that way. Because the reason why we stopped striving in the negative sense of the world and stressing is that God is the one teaching us contentment. The peace of God was in Paul's heart. He already wrote about that. He already wrote about the God of peace within him. And yet he's talking about this other part of where you can get peace and contentment. See, when you find yourself in place of want to change circumstances prematurely, the external part, remember that God is using circumstances in your life to have you surrender to the God who ultimately provides you his peace and not experiencing peace through external circumstances. That's the thing that he is constantly teaching us. Now with if you will look at verse 12 with me, he also says this. I know both how to be abased and I know how to be abound. And everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Here Paul is saying he was instructed. So he went from I am I've learned this now I am being instructed. It literally means initiated. Who's the one that is initiating this instruction?

Well, God. And he initiates it with circumstances. There's instruction behind every circumstance. God is doing and orchestrating this. He is orchestrating humiliation. He is orchestrating honor. He is orchestrating hunger. He's orchestrating abundance. He's accentuating need and prosperity in your life. There will be those seasons but basement and abounding as Paul mentions here and Paul says he has been through all of this all of these situations up to this point in his life and those mentioned and he experienced plenty more by the way he was one of the Pharisees the Pharisees and Pharisees were rich so he has been richness and he experienced poverty in the imprisonment of preaching the gospel he experienced both and he experienced overflow of honor as a Pharisee and also humiliation as a gospel preacher. He knew them all. The highs, all the way of the highs, all the ways of the lows. And he says this phrase, I am instructed. It invokes this personal mystery between a believer and in God. That it is God that is the one that instructing the believer. And he's explaining this mystery to us. He's not keeping it a secret. He's sharing that relationship he with the Lord. And he goes on and saying, Look, you may be overwhelmed by life situations. And he's saying is God is using these extremes to minister to your growth, to your benefit. And God uses sorrows to drive us to him. That's what sorrow is supposed to do, draw us to him. And then joy is to draw us to him as well. both in the basement and in the bounding. And he makes his instruction from a secret to a public testimony. This is Paul's testimony. A lot of times we like to hide when it's difficult. But that's not what Paul does.

He just lays it out. He lays it out to his brothers and sisters in Christ. And I thank God we have a prayer request group where we share what is going on in our lives. the joys of the praise of what God is doing in our lives and then also the sorrow, the difficulties in our lives. And we need prayer for both. Amen. We do. And so we should always be reminded that request group is there for you. Ask and you shall receive. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there will Jesus be. Consider the prayer of Ager. This is in proverbs chapter 30 verse 7 and 9. Agger requested that he would only have his own daily needs daily bread. He was only concerned Lord just give me what I need just for today. Another way of saying it. He wanted to avoid forgetting God due to prosperity or dishonoring him through stealing and poverty. You see, in a country like ours where we have abundance, materialism often acts as a barrier between God and us, doesn't it? It's a wedge. And abundance can be substantially more difficult, by the way, to navigate because having physical things leads humans to trust the world rather than trusting God. And because many Christians we can be blessed. Absolutely. I don't want to diminish that. You can be blessed and it's very easy then to suffer in the wrong way because it is more difficult by the way to live a Christian life in prosperity than in sorrow. Jesus said of the rich young ruler, It's more difficult for a camel to enter into Ivan needle than a rich man to be saved. I look at a I recall the rich young ruler in Matthew 19 16- 26. Let me expand on that. While he desired eternal life, that's why he came to Jesus. His attachment to his possessions was so strong that it prevented him to following Christ.

You see, his possessions possessed him so much that he saw greater wealth in the things that he had than in Christ. That's what materialism can do to someone. And then but thank God we have the story of Zakius who was also another rich person. He was a chief tax collector. It's like the chief IRS, right? Lot of money. And yet we have this rich man found in Luke 19:1-10. Zakius actually repents and a result of repentance turning away from finding wealth and possessions and founding wealth in Christ. It was done immediately. Repentance happens immediately. You see he was meditating too much on his things. And sometimes that's our greatest danger. We think about too much of our things instead of thinking about things of Christ. So this man thought less of his things and more about Christ. That's the proper posture and he was willing to give up his possessions and be generous at that. You know when a Christian becomes believer or true believer we become generous.

You ever notice that you start giving like you never gave before and it increases over time. That's a transformation that happens. You see, even though the crowd grumbled and like because he was like stealing from people, you see tax collectors were known as really bad people. They were not like the IRS is let me I forget it. they were like really shut even though like people were despising because he was out in public with Jesus. It's like oh man I can be like really like attacked. They didn't like to be in public and that's why he hid in a tree. He wanted to hide from people because if they found out he was

there, they probably beat him up to death. But Jesus called him. And I think if Jesus didn't call him, he wouldn't come down. But he trusted in the word of Christ and he came to him. And then what he did was in response to Jesus, look at what he does. He vows to give half of his goods to the poor and then repay anyone cheated four times the amount that he got that he cheated people. That's probably that's by the way a passage in the Old Testament that you're supposed to give four times the amount. So he was driven by the word of God. You see the same encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, the rich young ruler and Zakius, same encounter with the Lord, two different perspectives on possessions and two different outcomes. This is what I wanted to share. You see, this is why we must lean entirely on God's sustaining grace. It cannot be found within us. We will always mess it up. We need to constantly rely on God's grace because both prosperity and poverty are spiritually dangerous if faced alone. Many perish spiritually through saturation and many through hunger. Let God be your anchor in both. If you have an abundance, recognize that God is the one who keeps you from denying him. And if you are in need, recognize that God is using the trial to show you that he is your ultimate sustenance. So as we pray, pray, Lord, instruct me in every season of life. Keep me from pride of abundance and keep me from the despair of need.

Just like the prayer of Ager, Proverbs 30:7-9. Now let's go to verse 13. This is where God infuses his strength to his people. It reads, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. This is the core of Paul's secret. He's sharing his testimony. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. The power to do all things comes from the strength of Jesus. He doesn't say here I can endure all things because that's more dependent on self. He says, I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me. You see, in the original language, this suggests a vital union with the Lord Jesus. Literally mean to have the power to accomplish. The power to accomplish. It carries the idea to go through any circumstance without losing the focus on the mission that God gave to you. If you recall in Philippians 3:14, go ahead and turn there if you have your Bible. He said this was his mission that I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. You see that high calling? That's a missional statement. That's my goal is Christ to have more of him to have more understanding of this wonderful calling that I have and for you to have. You see, that's what's going to help you to go through all circumstances.

Keeping your eyes fixed on the author and finisher of our faith. God allows us to continue to not only live for him, but to serve others. That's the part of the Christian life. And that's why he says this in Philippians 4:13 to not be only encouragement to himself, but he shares it as a testimony to the Philippian church. Look, just as I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me, you can also do all things through Christ who strengthened you. And it's a great practical application for all of us as we serve each other in this local body. See, God breathes this power within us in man. And Paul relies completely on, by

the way, it is the resurrection power that he's mentioning here of Jesus flowing through him. It's a new life in him that he finds a renewed strength in his life. And it's not merely about surviving. This is not survival language. This is God causing him to thrive through all circumstances. If he was in survival mode, he wouldn't have been able to endure one or two of those afflictions. But because he thrived in the strength of Christ, he would be able to go through the long list, right, of enduring hardship. You see, you should think that his strength is more than capable. That's another area that we often forfeit that we think his strength is just limited to just this circumstance or that circumstance. No, his strength can help you in all circumstances. Amen. And that should be our understanding of this passage. God causes him to thrive through any circumstances. The literal meaning is found in Ephesians 6:10. It says this, Be strong in the Lord in the power of his might. Let me just draw your attention to this passage.

It remember if you call this is under the heading of the armor of God. So he's talking about it like it's an internal thing, but it's an internal shield. And what it is is that when circumstances are hitting that armor of God, it never penetrates your heart. It's the ultimate armor of God protecting your heart from being moved by every circumstance in life. That is what the spiritual armor does. It helps us to stand firm. You'll see later in the text. You can stand withstand anything. That's another way of putting it. any circumstances against all powers and rulers of authority in heaven and in earth because he gives you this spiritual armor that is the very power of his might. You're not relying on yourself anymore, brethren. You are relying on this supernatural power. You have no idea the power you have in you. Don't let the world, the flesh, and the devil diminish his strength. Amen. I can accomplish anything through Christ. God empowers you and I whatever he appoints in our lives to endure. Standing apart from God leaves us vulnerable, doesn't it?

Without the armor, by the way, there's parts of phrases where he says, Put on, put off, put on, put off. Put off the old man, put on the new man. He never says, Put off the spiritual armor. He only says, Put on the armor and stay there. So you stay with the armor of God. It's on you through this life. Through all the battles in your life, you have the spiritual armor that is never taken off. His power is on you. And the weight of our sins and the trials of life will no longer overwhelm you because he protects you from your own self. Pictures as it were a flower perched against a brink of a powerful waterfall and you see that waterfall pouring over that flower with relentless power and tons of weight. It's not the flower that's holding himself up. It's because he's connected to the rock. And that's very much an illustration of our lives. We are weak by ourselves, aren't we? But when we're hooked on to that rock, the foundation found in Christ, we're rooted, we're strong, we're secure, and we are unshakable because Christ is unshakable. And when we speak about this kind of truth in our lives, it carries meaning that changes not only our life circumstance internally, but the direction keeps us on the right path. Right? Because you

can see clearly, you can navigate clearly. You don't get bothered by being pulled to the left or to the right, but you stay centered and you keep on growing in the path that God has stoned for you. And this matters tremendously because Paul is able to transcend his physical situation always. He's able to just not pay attention to his physical situation and recognize that his true citizenship is in heaven. So, no, nothing can take away our citizenship in heaven. We felt that in Philippians 3:20. Always know that you're secure already in heaven. It may not feel like it here on earth, but you are in heaven. And God does that strengthening in us, not in advance. Remind yourself, his strength is on you moment by moment.

That's what it means. I can do all things. All things meaning all moments in your life. Moment by moment by moment. So you should pray, Lord, root me in Christ as your strength flows into my weakness. Whenever I'm going through times of weakness, please Lord, give me strength. And then lastly, in verse 14, this is where we're going to end. God connects us in fellowship to encourage one another. Notwithstanding, you have done well done that you did communicate with my afflictions. After declaring his ultimate dependence on Christ in verse 13, Paul makes sure the Philippians know he deeply appreciates what God did through them. See, he doesn't just mention about his relationship with God, but his relationship with the church. He always connects the two. And he says this. He says, By their gift, they shared in his distress, and were not ashamed of his imprisonment. God does not intend for us to be isolated in self-sufficiency. It is contrary to God's ultimate plan that he wants us to be constantly in fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ. And that is part of what we do here on Sunday, but also other days of the week to stay connected. And we have that opportunity every time. I try to make that opportunity every time through sermons that are posted online through our WhatsApp through our church app so we can always be knit together as brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the week. So we see in verse 13, God strengthens Paul through Christ and then God strengthens Paul through his people in verse 14. God and his people. You see, while we may bear water for the journey, we often find moments where we need fresh stream of water. And that's what fellowship is, a fresh stream of water. It should make you feel like every time you come into the body of Christ, it's a refreshment to your soul. If you're not feeling like that, there's something wrong. But you should always come in that there's flourishing going on when I'm with the body of Christ. Because we're not in this path alone.

We are all in it together. He is our ultimate private provider, yes, but he often provides through his people. And he infrequently employs his followers to act as that refreshing stream. The reason we gather as a church is that God intends for his people to surround one another. When God prompts someone to show you kindness, receive it with gratitude. Be grateful when an opportunity comes. When someone is in affliction, let God use you to come alongside that person. You may be the very person that helps. You see, we

see the intertwining of God's strength in us with the power God gives to encourage fellow believers. And so in conclusion, as you find yourself as believers think that you have nothing to offer, God uses your acts of kindness, your acts of compassion to strengthen others in the body. This is the way God has designed the local church to be as a community. And so may you be a channel of blessing today not only to your mother that comes but to the rest of the church family. And may God bless and cultivate this kind of level of care that God gives to you today. Let's pray. Thank you father for your word. Thank you for the testimony of Paul. Thank you for the testimony of the church at Philippi. We are instructed of these things for our own admonition, for all our own good and for our growth in the individual lives as believers of Christ as well as corporately as a church body. May we continue to look more like Christ, like the light of the world and the salt of the world.

Help us to be this kind of thing that is not unlike anything else. no other institution like the local church. We thank you, Lord, that we are the bride of Christ and one day we're going to see Christ face to face. But until then, Lord, continues to help us to stay focused on the great commission of making disciples of Christ in all the nations and that we would do so baptizing people in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded us. and he promises that he will be with us the end of the age. We thank you for that promise. I pray for those that are don't know Christ, that are outside of Christ. I pray for them that they will find the deepest treasure found in him so that they can try find true peace that's found only in Christ that surpasses all understanding. That they can have peace with you, Father. That they can have it by the cleansing of their sins. all of it blotted out and to remove all the guilt from it and to have a right relationship with you. We thank you for all the blessings you do throughout today in Jesus name. Amen.