

Philippians 4:10-23

The Secret of Contentment

Image Church // Philippians Week 12

MPS: I can do all things through Christ

Introduction

Well good morning Image Family!

Well, today is a unique, and I would even say special day for us as we have officially moved to **phase 2** in our regathering plan!

I want to welcome all of you who are joining us today via **Watch Parties** this morning that are gathering all around the city!

For those of you that are new with us, this weekend we have rolled out a new opportunity for viewing the gathering through these **Watch Parties** - which are small groups of **no more than 12 people** that are being hosted in homes around the city.

Just to be clear this isn't the **only** option; this is **an option** as we continue in the midst of COVID-19. We recognize that many of you may not feel comfortable, or even able to do this and that's OK.

Our hope in this is to create space **an** option for people to come together each week. Some of our host homes are hosting as little as **2-3 people**. We fully anticipate this to be something that grows gradually as we work toward gathering again in the future.

In the meantime, this allows us to take a step forward...

Each host home application is based, and upon approval, is identified on our website at imageATL.com/watchparty. These homes have been given hosting kits with cleaning supplies, masks, and hand sanitizer and they are practicing social distancing.

So again, if you would like to find the closest **watch party** to where you live visit imageATL.com/watchparty.

Also, we would love to add additional host homes, and so if you're interested in hosting a watch party you can also go to imageATL.com/watchparty and fill out an application and we will follow up with you!

Alright if you have your bibles go ahead and turn to Philippians 4... This weekend we're going to be wrapping up our series in the book of Philippians.

By the way I want to encourage those of you that have missed some weeks to visit our webpage, phone app or YouTube channel and get caught up.

- You have a great opportunity to really dive into the book of Philippians for the purpose of helping your grow as a Christ follower.
- There has never been an easier season to be able to stay caught up on our teaching than now.
 - Don't coast this summer!

Alright hopefully you've had time to grab your bibles and get to Philippians chapter 4.

Here's what I am going to do today, I'm going to narrate through the conclusion of Paul's letter and what you will see is that the text teaches itself in so many ways- I just want to help you see that...

And then we're going to dive into **verse 13** and that's where we're going to camp this morning... **Phil. 4:13** is one of the most familiar verses in the Bible, and yet it is also one of the most misquoted verses in all of the Bible.

And so, this morning I want to unpack it for you and leave you with a *very simple yet profound truth* that I believe is revolutionary for your life.

Ok, lets jump in and read through the whole text and then we will circle back around to verse 13...

Philippians 4:10-23

10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again you renewed your care for me. He wants to make sure they don't hear this as a rebuke, so he goes on to say this: **You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it.** He says I know you cared for me and wanted to help, but you weren't physically able to do that due to the distance- that is until they were able to send him Epaphroditus...

And then watch this, this is so Paul, he doesn't want them to get the wrong idea and think that all he cares about in his friendship with the church in Philip is the gifts that he can get from them... So, he says this...

11 I don't say this out of need, and then Paul turns this into a teachable moment in order to show them that he doesn't look to the their gifts as a source of contentment **for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself.** **12** I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with 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. We'll come back to this an unpack it more in a little bit... Paul then picks back up on the way that church has cared for him pointing out that even though Paul's contentment isn't found through gifts, what the church in Philippi did for him is a good thing- and he commends them on it...

14 Still, you did well by partnering 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. Paul now interrupts himself again for the sake of clarity- *he doesn't want them to think he's buttering their biscuit in order to get more stuff from them – my translation...*

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit, that is increasing to your account.

Paul says: I don't want more stuff from you, I want more for you... He wants to see them progress in the faith— which remember is the foundation of his letter to the church in Philip that Paul holds up in **chapter 1!**

And then Paul holds up for them the implications of their generosity- He's saying that by giving you're gaining; your heavenly reward is increasing as a result of your generosity!! Paul's saying that's what I care about!

And then finally, after a bunch of teachable moments fleshed out, Paul addresses their gift directly- and he thanks them for the way their generosity has impacted him showing them that it was a sweet sacrifice to God...

Verse 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.

Love this, Paul assures them that in the midst of their generosity, in the midst of their giving, that God will make sure they are taken care of and that not only will all of their physical needs be met, but God will also meet every need that they have emotionally, spiritually and eternally through Christ for the glory of God!

Verse 21: Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you greetings. **22** All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. **23** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Like I told you, this text preaches itself in so many ways - there are so many points of encouragement and so many challenges in what we just read- *I could do a 6-week sermon series through this text...*

My hope is that the Spirit pricked your heart with some of the things that Paul said, or at the very least makes you want to read it again or look into it some more...

But like I said at the beginning, I want to spend this morning unpacking **Philippians 4:13**... It's so important that we understand this passage because in it we have an incredible reality that we get to hold onto...

But for so long this verse has been ripped out of its context and used in ways it's not meant to be used- and the irony is, this verse is way more powerful in its context than when we take it out of its context!

Example:

Some people point back to **Evander Holyfield vs Mike Tyson** fight that really put this verse on the map-

- Evander Holyfield came out of the tunnel with a new addition on his robe, it was **Philippians 4:13!**
- As if *I can do all things*- means I am going to beat up Mike Tyson...
- Turns out he did beat up **Mike Tyson**... Everyone was like *Yeah! I can do all things through Christ!!!*
- The irony is that he had it on his robe again for his fight against **Lennox Lewis**... And this time he gets beat up!!

Philippians 4:13 has been like a **catch all** verse for us over time that we use for our benefit... **I am guilty of it too...**

Example:

I have here with me my baseball bat from College...

- **Joke** about how everything is crossed out on it...
- But I had written on it **Philippians 4:13**...

For me, like many others- this verse was ordained by God for me for the purpose of empowering me to succeed and excel in the things that I wanted to succeed and excel in, primarily getting a hit!!

The funny thing is, what happens if the pitcher also had this on his glove!!

Here's where things get derailed and when the verse gets misquoted:

The assumption is that **Philip 4:13** is intended to give us a hope and a power to be able to abound and excel all the time in everything, that we have the ability to conquer or achieve whatever it is that we are after...

- Big meeting...
- Huge test and I didn't study...
- Sports...
- I have a pitch I am making at work...
- **My brother when he was young lifting something heavy in the yard...**

Side note: This is why context is so important... When you pull Scripture out of its context it's no longer God's Word, it's your word and that's dangerous...

Ok, so let's read **verse 13** in its context and then look at what it means...

Paul says, by the way remember, he's writing this from a jail cell:

11 ... I have learned to be **content** in whatever circumstances I find myself. **12** I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with 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 partnering with me in my hardship.

Repeated words here that I want you to see...

- **Learned, circumstances** (whatever, all, any), **content**...

What's the purpose of repetition? **Emphasis on his point**...

So, what does this show us... **It shows us that Paul's goal here is to show us how he has learned the secret for contentment regardless of the circumstances that he's facing or going through...**

What is the secret?

Phil. 4:13 **I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.**

And by **all things** here, he doesn't mean empowerment to accomplish **all** the things you want to accomplish... When he says **all things**, he is literally referring to **all things**...

In every circumstance, every situation, in success or failure, whether he has a lot or a little, whether there is need or abundance, hungry or well fed... Regardless of the circumstance he has the ability to abound...

The Secret he's revealing is that **contentment isn't found in circumstances, it's found in Christ**...

Here's what I want you to understand this morning... **Philippians 4:13** **isn't a verse that empowers success in your circumstances, it's a verse that points you to a person that's better than any circumstance.**

I want that to sync in this morning...

Contentment has nothing to do with your circumstances...

- If I could just get this job
- If I could just hit this dollar figure in my income
- If I could just get this paid off
- If I could just save enough
- If I could just have this possession...
- If my wife would just...
- If my kids would just...
- If I could just find the right person to marry...

See our problem is that we want God to **manipulate our circumstances** to because we think that's the thing that we need to be contentment...

None of those things will make you content... They make you happy for a short amount of time but that's it, it will be onto the next thing...

Content by definition is *the state of satisfaction*... You are completely satisfied... Circumstances just can't offer you that...

Only through Christ can you find true contentment... How? How is this true for Paul, how is this true for me?

- **GOSPEL**
 - Jesus is everything I need...
 - In Him I find everything I desire

And listen, this is something that Paul **learned** the secret for being content...

- **Some of you have not learned the secret to contentment because you're not leaning into Christ...**

Learning to be content in Christ comes by looking to Christ... It means seeing Him more clearly for who He is and what He's done for you...

OK so let me get **really practical here**... **What is the simple yet profound truth in Phil. 4:13?**

Contentment is not found in my circumstances or situations; it's found in Christ.

That means that whether or not you have or don't have, whether you are right or poor, if you are in need or have plenty in Christ you have all that you need...

That is so freeing, because it means that the thing you think you need, you don't need it!

It means that even though you're not in the place you want to be it's OK, it means that regardless of where you are right now you can be content...

And listen for those of you that have an abundance right now, which is probably most of us, esp. compared to the rest of the world...

- **Be careful- do not look to your abundance to breed contentment...** Don't confuse temporary happiness with contentment- vision gets cloudy in abundance...
- **Hold you things loosely... Use them for God's glory...**

Conclusion [VAMP]

John Piper: The secret is seeing and savoring and being satisfied in Christ as the most valuable thing. The world has lost its power to addict you because Christ is superior!

Let me ask you this, *is Christ the most valuable thing to you?*

If not, *what is, and why?*

Where are you looking for contentment right now?

Some of you are listening and you have been looking in all of the wrong places for contentment... And what you need to see is that Jesus is the only thing that can satisfy you, he is the only one who can fulfil you, he is the well that never runs dry...

And you need to look to him this morning...

The secret to being content is that you can *do all things through Christ who strengthens you...*

And it's when you grab hold of that truth that you will truly be able to say with Paul, that to live is Christ!

Pray...