

# Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



**"I Have Learned the Mystery of 'This-is-Enough'"**

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

**Devotion and Discussion Questions**

**Key Texts (TLV): Phil. 4:10-13; Phil. 2:3, 8; Phil. 3:10-11; Phil. 1:21; Deut. 8**

It is amazing how quickly our circumstances can begin determining our attitude. When things are going well, we breathe a little easier. When the bank account has enough, when everyone is healthy, when the relationship is peaceful, when the plan is working—we feel like we are doing pretty well. But let the “scoreboard” suddenly change, and our attitude can change right along with it. When there is lack, disappointment, uncertainty, or something beyond our control, suddenly joy becomes more difficult. Without realizing it, we can begin allowing the scoreboard of our circumstances to determine how we live.

Paul writes Philippians from prison, and yet he describes something he has learned that circumstances can no longer take away from him. He knows what it is to have plenty, and he knows what it is to have almost nothing. Yet somewhere along the way, as a disciple of Yeshua, Paul has learned the mystery of “this is enough.” It is not because Paul has discovered some hidden strength within himself. He has learned that whether the scoreboard says plenty or want, success or suffering, abundance or lack, there is a standard that remains unchanged: **Messiah is enough.**

## **1. MY JOY IS NOT DETERMINED BY WHAT I HAVE**

Paul begins by saying, *“I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last you have renewed your care for me. Indeed, you were concerned for me, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for whatever circumstance I am in, I have learned to be content.”* (Phil. 4:10-11). The Philippians had sent Paul a gift through Epaphroditus, and Paul genuinely rejoiced over it. Their concern for him had “blossomed again.” Their gift was tangible evidence of what was happening in their hearts—their *phronein*, their mindset, their attitude toward him. Paul was not simply rejoicing because someone had finally filled his stomach. His heart was full because he could see what the Lord was doing in **their** hearts. Their concern had become tangible action.

But Paul immediately wants to make something clear: *“I am not saying this because I am in need.”* His joy is not dependent upon whether his belly is full. His lack does not determine his mindset, and his abundance does not determine his joy. Paul says that whatever circumstance he finds himself in, he has **learned** to be content. The language behind “content” carries the sense of “this is sufficient”—“this is enough.” That does not mean Paul is pretending that hunger does not hurt or that needs are not real. It means those needs no longer have the authority to determine who he is, how he thinks, or whether he rejoices. Paul’s joy is rooted somewhere deeper than his circumstances.

## 2. I HAVE LEARNED THE SECRET IN BOTH PLENTY AND WANT

Paul continues, *"I know how to live in humble circumstances, and I know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment—both to be filled and to go hungry, to have abundance and to suffer need."* (Phil. 4:12). Notice that Paul does not merely say that he learned how to survive difficult times. He learned how to live faithfully in **both** directions. He knows how to be humbled, and he knows how to abound. He knows what it means to go hungry, and he knows what it means to be filled. He has learned the secret in lack, and he has learned the secret in abundance.

That may be more difficult than we realize. When we are in lack, the temptation can be to become fearful, bitter, self-protective, or to begin hoarding what little we have. When we are abounding, the temptation can be to become comfortable, self-sufficient, or impressed with ourselves. But neither circumstance changes the standard. If I am down by fifty or up by fifty, the scoreboard does not determine how I play. In lack, there should still be humility, selflessness, joy, and Messiahlikeness. In abundance, there should still be humility, selflessness, joy, and Messiahlikeness. Paul learned that his circumstances could change dramatically without changing the One upon whom his life was fixed. The standard was not the scoreboard. The standard was Messiah.

## 3. "THIS IS ENOUGH" MEANS HE IS ENOUGH

Then comes one of the most familiar statements Paul ever wrote: *"I can do all things through Messiah who strengthens me."* (Phil. 4:13). But in context, Paul is not saying, "I can accomplish anything I decide to accomplish because Messiah will make me successful." The "all things" Paul is talking about are the things he has just described: being filled and being hungry, abounding and lacking, living in prosperity and walking through humble circumstances. Paul is saying, in effect, "I can live faithfully through **all of it** because I am strengthened in Him." The secret of contentment is not that Paul has finally become strong enough to handle life. The secret is that Messiah is enough.

That distinction is important. Paul is not saying, "I am sufficient." He is saying, "**This is enough because HE is enough.**" His eyes are fixed somewhere beyond the scoreboard. He has already said, *"For to me, to live is Messiah and to die is gain."* (Phil. 1:21). His desire is to know Yeshua, *"and the power of His resurrection and the sharing of His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death."* (Phil. 3:10). Paul is a man wrapped up in Messiah. If he has abundance, he is in Messiah. If everything is stripped away, he is still in Messiah. If he lives, he belongs to Messiah. If he dies, he is with Messiah. Circumstances can change what Paul possesses, but they cannot change **where Paul is**: he is **in Him**.

## CONCLUSION

Contentment does not mean that we stop praying for needs to be met or that we pretend difficult circumstances are pleasant. Paul was genuinely grateful for the Philippians' gift. He appreciated their generosity. Yet the gift was not the foundation beneath his feet. Messiah was. Paul had learned something through walking with Yeshua in prison cells, hardships, hunger, ministry, friendship, abundance, and suffering: **the scoreboard does**

**not get to determine my faithfulness, my joy, or my identity.** Whether I have much or little, whether today feels like victory or defeat, I am still in Messiah. And because I am in Him, He is enough.

Perhaps that is where the Lord is calling some of us today. Maybe you have been staring at the scoreboard. You have been measuring the goodness of God by what you have, what you lack, what has happened, or what has not happened yet. Bring that to Him. Today, don't simply pray, "Lord, change my circumstances." Let's pray, **"Lord, teach me the mystery Paul learned. Teach me to know that You are enough."** If abundance comes, let me remain humble. If lack comes, let me remain faithful. If the scoreboard changes tomorrow, let my eyes remain fixed on Yeshua. May we become people who can say with Paul—not because we are sufficient, but because Messiah is—*"I can do all things through Messiah who strengthens me."*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Phil. 4:10–11, why does Paul say that his rejoicing over the Philippians' gift was not simply because they had met his material need?
2. What does Paul mean when he says he has "learned" to be content? Why do you think contentment must be learned rather than simply felt?
3. Paul says he has learned the secret in both abundance and lack. Which do you think poses the greater spiritual danger for you personally—having too little or having plenty? Why?
4. What "scoreboard" are you most tempted to look at right now—finances, health, success, relationships, ministry, other people's approval, or something else? How has it been affecting your joy or your attitude?
5. What would it look like practically this week for you to say, "Messiah is enough," even if your present circumstances do not change?

### CLOSING PRAYER

Father, teach us the mystery of "this is enough." Forgive us for the ways we have allowed circumstances to determine our joy, our attitude, and even our confidence in You. When we are in lack, teach us to trust You without fear and to remain humble, generous, and faithful. When we are abounding, keep us from pride and self-sufficiency, and remind us that every good thing comes from Your hand. Fix our eyes on Yeshua. Teach us that our sufficiency is not found in ourselves but in Messiah. Whatever the scoreboard says today, let us live according to the standard of His life in us. Strengthen us in Him so that in plenty or in want, in joy or in difficulty, we can faithfully say: You are enough.

*B'Shem Yeshua*, In the name of Yeshua, amen.