



Sermon Text: Philippians 4:10-13

Sermon Date: May 28, 2017

As Paul closes the letter, he thanks the church for their gift of support. Yet he clarifies that he has learned the secret of contentment. We discovered three facts about gospel-shaped contentment from our passage.

GOSPEL-SHAPED CONTENTMENT IS INDEPENDENT OF CIRCUMSTANCES

While many of us believe that we could be truly content if our circumstances changed, Paul stresses that true contentment is independent of circumstances. He has learned to be content *“in whatever situation”* and *“in any and every circumstance.”*

GOSPEL-SHAPED CONTENTMENT IS LEARNED THROUGH EXPERIENCE

We also discovered that contentment isn't acquired through a textbook. It doesn't suddenly happen through tranquil meditation. Contentment is learned the hard way—through experience. D.A. Carson points out, “The secret of contentment is not normally learned in posh circumstances or in deprived circumstances, but in exposure to both.” Do you want to learn such contentment? Do you dare to pray for God to detach your contentment from your circumstances and place it upon Himself entirely?

GOSPEL-SHAPED CONTENTMENT IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH CHRIST

While verse 13 is often ripped from context and applied to accomplishing all types of great feats through Christ's power, Paul has something more difficult in mind. His point is that whatever circumstances he finds himself in, whether rich or poor, powerful or powerless, preaching to great crowds or incarcerated in a filthy prison, he has learned to cast himself upon Christ's strength and to be content. He can do *“all things”* that God providently assigns him to do—no matter what they are—through Christ who strengthens him.

THREE WAYS THE GOSPEL ENABLES CONTENTMENT

1. **Better Strength.** We don't have the power to be perfectly content. We can't make it happen in our own strength. But through the gospel, we are given better strength, and God's strength is made perfect in our weaknesses. The secret of contentment is becoming more aware of our weakness and depending upon Christ alone to be our strength.
2. **Better Perspective.** First, the gospel provides a better picture of **what we deserve**. Most of our discontentment stems from thinking we deserve better. But the gospel shows us what we truly deserve—Hell—so that we see all of our circumstances are always drenched in grace. Spurgeon said, “As long as a man is alive and out of Hell, he cannot have any cause to complain.” Second, it gives us a better perspective by revealing **whose we are**. We are God's! We have a Dad who is in control of every single atom in the Universe; therefore, every one of our circumstances comes to us from His wise and loving hand.
3. **Better Identity.** Much of our contentment teeters on the opinion of others. Who we think we are depends upon who they think we are. But the gospel frees us from such tyranny. It shows us that who we are ultimately and eternally depends upon who He (God) says we are. And the God who knows us intimately, knowing all our secrets and sins, also loves us thoroughly in Christ. Our worth and identity are established by Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. How would your life be different if you had a relaxed contentment in all circumstances?
3. Do you dare to pray for God to detach your contentment from your circumstances and place it upon Himself entirely? If no, what are you afraid of?
4. What are some practical ways you can begin cultivating contentment by seeing life through a gospel lens?