

The Secret to Contentment

Phil 4:10-13

Intro

2 Grave stones of a couple:

- “She died for want of things”
- “He died trying to give them to her”

Dis-satisfaction and discontent is:

- The restless thing in our souls
- The thought that “if we just. . .” then we’ll be content
- A lie in society that says “I just need. . .”

Context

Stoicism - they believed the only way to contentment is to abolish the desires. They eliminated all desires, emotions. They cared about no one.

“autarkeia” - one who is entirely self-sufficient. A person who is completely independent. They could eliminate all desire.

“The stoics made of the heart a desert and called it peace” - t r. glover

Paul says however, that his sufficiency comes from a different source - Christ.

In the back of your mind is the thought: “If I could just do, get, have this position. If I could just somehow have a better version of me”.

v10

But Now I rejoice in the Lord greatly!

“revived” - rare greek word that means “blossom again” “rejoice” - megalos (where we get the word “mega”). This word is at the emphatic position. He’s saying this is the most important thing about his thing.

Why would Paul need money when in Jail?

- because the people who were in prison in rome relied on their families to provide for them - food, clothing, everything.

Last week:

- 2 ladies not getting along
- Show your gentle spirit

- Stop being anxious
- instead of being anxious, turn everything over to God!

Assumption: What Paul is talking about in the next paragraph is coupled with the the previous about anxiety.

This is from a Biblical perspective.

4 things about a contented person:

It is a process (v11-12)

“being filled” - “paras” used of feeding and fattening animals.

“humble means” - to be low in resources. The connotation of a mountain being mined low, or a river running dry.

In Chapter 3 Paul states that he counts all things as being rubbish. Paul gave everything up in order to serve Christ.

I have learned the secret.

“secret” - “meueo” - To be instructed, initiated. It was a metaphor used in the initiatory rights in the pagan cults/religions.

“have learned” - a process that is still working.

This is was not a one time thing, this is a process.

2 Corinthians 12:10

“When I am weak” - therefore I am strong. When we are fully reliant on God that is when He takes over.

Independent of Life’s circumstances (v11)

“want” - “husteresis” means, destitute. Wherever God has means that is where I want to be.

This doesn’t mean we can be lazy!

He doesn’t react with feelings!

The process involves learning to submit the authority of Christ in our lives.

Can you be content with God’s will?

It’s impossible to have a vessel filled with air and water at the same time. The same is true for the believer. We cannot make the world’s possessions our end aim, or fill our heart. We must have our passion for Christ fill our heart. That is when we will be made into being content.

“Joy of living” - Dwight Pentecost.

The contented person is not possessed by things (v12)

“I know how to get along with humble means”

“know” - “oida” the highest form of knowledge. To know it up in the head and in the heart (the feelings). In ps.act. tense.

How can we be happy when the lifestyle of the rich and famous determine how we live?

There is nothing with having nice things, but do they control you?

A bankrupt man was killed by a new sofa - he ended up with a completely new furniture set, and then moved to a new house to hold all of his stuff.

You don't have to be living in poverty. There is nothing wrong with wealth.

Contentment is found in the OT:

- Abraham - sacrifice of Isaac. God did this to remove Isaac from the temple of Abraham's life.

A contentment person is God Sufficient (v13)

“All things” is in the emphatic position.

“do” - ischou. Able to do

“strengthen” - “endunamoo” comes from “dunamis”.

Application

What is it in your life that is on the throne?

1. Contentment begins with Christ
2. What occupies the temple of your heart?
3. Accept God's sovereign hand in your circumstances
4. Develop a heart of thanksgiving. Thank God for the things that He has given you.

Oh what a happy soul I am! Although I cannot see. I am resolved that in this world, contented I will be - “Fanny Crosby” - Who became blind when she was a child.