

Call To Worship

"Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken...you make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." (Psalm 16:5-8, 11)

Philippians 4:10-13

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

A World View of Contentment

- Contentment reveals character; character reveals conviction;
- Often, contentment is observed through
 - 1.) The pursuit of happiness;
 - 2.) Passivity in escapes

1.) The Pursuit of Happiness

- ½ of Americans claim to be happy;
- Spiritual Spending is a \$10billion industry;
- Success is measured by trophies

2.) Passivity in Escapes

- As an example, in entertainment: Americans spend between 20-30 hours a week watching TV
 - In binge-watching, the brain releases dopamine and creates a pseudo-addiction;
 - In TV, many develop "identification" or "wishful identification";
 - The ending of program can cause "situational depression."

→ If contentment isn't a bad thing, as Paul writes, then how do we obtain it without losing our identity or falling into escapes? How do we, as Christians, "press on toward the goal"?

The Central Focus (vv. 10–11)

1.) For the Apostle Paul, Christ is at the center of everything

→ **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."** (Philippians 1:21);

→ **"...and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also..."** (Philippians 2:24)

→ **"...and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death."** (Philippians 3:9-10);

→ **"I rejoiced in the Lord greatly..."** (Philippians 4:10a)

2.) The word "concern" is used to help explain that being like-minded comes from having the same attitude of mind in Christ;

3.) The word "content" is not used to communicate that his friendship with the Philippians is based on need or utility, but in their foundation on Christ;

→ Paul uses this word against the culture of the philosophers of that time. Stoic philosophy taught:

• *that contentment is when a person "becomes an independent man sufficient to himself and in need of none else;"*

• *"A man should be sufficient unto himself for all things and able, by the power of his own will, to resist the force of circumstances."*

→ Our embrace of contentment comes not from our personal strength, intellect, or experience, but in our communion with Christ

Empowered (vv. 12-13)

1.) Paul has obtained success and has also been humbled;

2.) The "secret" of contentment isn't in fluctuating circumstances, but in keeping His eyes on his relationship with Christ;

→ The opposite of contentment is unbelief;

Benediction