



Restored to Contentment and Joy Part 4: A Declaration of Dependence!

Alternative Title: The Peace of God

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Reading Philippians Chapter 4:1-23

So what have we learned so far that will help us reclaim (or perhaps claim) our contentment and joy?

1. That God is in control of our lives and circumstances, has begun a good work in us, and will complete it. (Php 1:6)
2. That like Paul, whether by our lives or our deaths, our goal would be to magnify Christ! (Php 1:20)
3. That “to live is Christ, and to die is gain!” (Php 1:21)
4. That if our lives (conversation) befits the Gospel, we can be content and without fear. (Php 1:27-29)
5. That there are consolations, comforts, fellowship, and bowels and mercies in Christ! (Php 2:1)
6. That unity and likemindedness contribute to our peace and joy. (Php 2:2-4)
7. That Christ is our model of humility and sacrifice! (Php 2:5-8)
8. That the way “up” is “down.” (Php 2:9-10)
9. That nothing compares to knowing Christ; counting our “gain” as “loss” to know Him brings contentment and joy! (Php 3:7-8)
10. That forgetting those things which are behind frees us to press towards the mark! Our citizenship is in heaven and we shall be changed! (Php 3:12-13; 20-21)

A Declaration of Dependence!

Philippians 4:1 (KJV) Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

1. Paul’s use of “therefore” connects this exhortation to “stand fast in the LORD” to his previous statements:
 - **Philippians 3:20-21 (KJV)** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
 - **Philippians 3:20-21 (NLT)** But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. **21** He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.
2. Why do we STAND believer? What motivates us to endure the world’s mocking and persecution for righteousness sake? Eternal life with Christ! **Matthew 5:10 (KJV) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

3. Paul expressed his pastoral love to Philippi: they are precious to him (longed for, joy and crown, beloved.)
4. But the context of such expression is his desire that Philippi stays unified in Christ and committed to the truth, even in the midst of falsehood. (In context, the Judaizers and antinomians.)
5. My dearly beloved, are you ready to “stand fast” in the LORD regardless of what comes?

Philippians 4:2-3 (KJV) *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.*

1. Paul now calls out a situation present in the church, two women who were not getting along. He calls them to be of the same mind.
2. He also calls a “true yokefellow” to assist.
 - Although we don’t know to whom Paul is referring, MacArthur writes, “The Greek word pictures two oxen in a yoke, pulling the same load. A companion is a partner or an equal in a specific endeavor—in this case a spiritual one. It is possible that this individual is unnamed, but it is best to take the Greek word translated "companion" as a proper name (Syzygos). He was likely one of the church elders ([Php 1:1](#)).”
3. What is important about this passage is threefold:
 - Paul’s desire for the preservation of church unity, going as far as identifying the sisters. One gets the sense that Paul was not out to embarrass, but rather to edify!
 - Paul’s desire that the unpleasant power of disunity not disrupt the church being able to “stand fast in the LORD.”
 - Paul’s obvious care for and respect for “those women.” He reminds the church that even though they are having a disagreement, they were co-laborers in the gospel and their names were written in the book of life.
4. Lesson: the LORD sees our disagreements and strife and it matters to Him. Let us remember chapter 2:1-4:

Philippians 2:1-4 (KJV) *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

Philippians 4:4-5 (KJV) *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

1. Amen! Shifting back to a main theme (joy regardless), Paul exhorts rejoicing! Again, in case you missed it, Paul is writing from prison! From John Henry Jowett:

Christian joy is a mood independent of our immediate circumstances. If it were dependent on our surroundings, then, indeed, it would be as uncertain as an

unprotected candle burning on a gusty night. One moment the candle burns clear and steady, the next moment the blaze leaps to the very edge of the wick, and affords little or no light. But Christian joy has no relationship to the transient setting of the life, and therefore it is not the victim of the passing day. At one time my conditions arrange themselves like a sunny day in June; a little later they rearrange themselves like a gloomy day in November. One day I am at the wedding; the next day I stand by an open grave. One day, in my ministry, I win ten converts for the Lord; and then, for a long stretch of days, I never win one. Yes, the days are as changeable as the weather, and yet the Christian joy can be persistent. Where lies the secret of its glorious persistency?

Here is the secret. "Lo! I am with you all the days." In all the changing days, "He changeth not, neither is weary." He is no fairweather Companion, leaving me when the year grows dark and cold. He does not choose my days of prosperous festival, though not to be found in my days of impoverishment and defeat. He does not show Himself only when I wear a garland, and hide Himself when I wear a crown of thorns. He is with me "all the days"—the prosperous days and the days of adversity; days when the funeral bell is tolling, and days when the wedding bell is ringing. "All the days." The day of life—the day of death—the day of judgment.

2. The word for "moderation" means "patience, gentleness." Paul is implying, I believe, that there should be a difference in how believers respond to situations and circumstances based on the finished work of Christ and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. This difference should be obvious to those observing!
3. Not only that, but believers should have a care in these matters because "The LORD is at hand."
4. Some take that to mean that "He is present in the church" and others that "He is coming soon." Both are true! Let us live with the reality of both! Remember, He holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden candlesticks! (Rev 1:13, 16)

Philippians 4:6-7 (KJV) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

1. Hallelujah! There is no reason to be "anxious" (ESV) or "worry" (NLT)! Instead we can simply (but powerfully) pray!
2. SO many of us miss the powerful inheritance embedded in these verses! The freedom therein! The contentment! The joy! "In everything" the Christian can pray!
3. Supplication means "to humbly seek." Thanksgiving means "to show gratitude." Believers, with humility, can ask the LORD for the things upon their hearts with an attitude of gratitude.
4. AND THEN PEACE COMES! Right then. Right there. PLEASE NOTE that nothing is said of God's answer. The peace of God, which by the way guards or keeps our hearts and minds, is NOT dependent upon His answer! (Again, Paul was in prison; he went on to be executed!)
5. Beloved, based on the consistent sadness so many experience, I wonder if either we don't pray enough or if we misunderstand the purpose of prayer? Prayer is not about getting

what we want but rather about aligning our will with His! It is about communion. It is about trust in a sovereign God!

6. The Greek word for “keep” means “to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight.” (Thayer) Our hearts need both: keeping stuff out and keeping stuff in!
7. **The Peace of God**, which is beyond understanding, is a part of our inheritance in Christ Jesus! It is ours, NOW. And we need it! We need our hearts and minds protected!

Philippians 4:8-9 (KJV) Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

1. Paul now gives practical advice to help keep that precious peace! As most of us know, it can be elusive!
2. In addition to constant prayer, mental intentionality is commanded. And he gives us a standard of measurement as to what kinds of things are worthy of the saint’s emotional attention and intellectual consideration: think on these types of things:

- Things that are true (truth)
- Things that are honest (honorable, dignified, worth veneration)
- Things that are just (right or righteous)
- Things that are pure (clean, chaste, modest)
- Things that are lovely (acceptable)
- Things that are of good report (well spoken of)
- Things that are virtuous (excellent, moral goodness)
- Things that are praiseworthy (commendable)

3. May I suggest that all of these things are defined by the Word of God and are embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself?
4. May I also suggest that the world, the flesh, and the devil will tempt you to focus on the very opposite of these things?
5. These suggestions are confirmed in verse nine where Paul says these are the kinds of practices they have learned from him, presumably through the Gospel he taught. He again offers up himself as an apostolic pattern to follow, as he does in several places in his epistles.

Philippians 4:10-13 (KJV) But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

1. As the letter closes, Paul thanks Philippi for their financial assistance and rejoices that after a pause it had once again resumed.
2. Always careful with the subject of money, Paul lets them know that money wasn't the most important thing. In fact, he had learned to be content regardless of the circumstances.
3. By God's grace, Paul was able to handle having, and not having, being well supplied and being hungry...with contentment! He told Timothy:

1 Timothy 6:6-8 (KJV) *But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*

4. Verse 13 has strengthened Christians for 2000 years! But may we be reminded of the context: contentment regardless of circumstances!
5. In other words, Christ gives the strength to (or enables) the believer to withstand any challenge. He helps us know how to be abound AND how to suffer need in a way that pleases Him!
6. Therefore "I can do all things" is not an arrogant statement; it is the opposite! **It is a Declaration of Dependence (not independence)!**
7. LORD, we too declare our dependence upon You! We can only "do all things" with your power and strength!

Philippians 4:14-18 (KJV) *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.*

1. Paul's ultimate goal was the blessing of the churches he served. The manifestation of this heart was a remarkable selflessness.
2. May we remember that giving ultimately blesses the giver; that it does something in our hearts that moves closer to Christ.
3. If nothing else, it is an act of worship; Paul uses language commensurate with temple worship. (v18)

Philippians 4:19-20 (KJV) *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

1. Paul connects the giving hearts of Philippians to the giving heart of the Father.
2. In other words, Paul is encouraging Philippi that because of their generosity, God will supply all of their needs.
3. There is a principal here of which we would do well to take note: God often responds to our generosity; He wants us to be givers. Similar words were given to Corinth:

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (KJV) *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

Philippians 4:21-23 (KJV) *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

1. Final greetings are offered to the Saints at Philippi. Of note is verse 22. McDonald writes:

*We are compelled to love this verse for its reference to **Caesar's household**. Our imaginations are strongly tempted to run riot. Who are the members of Nero's household referred to here? Were they some of the soldiers who had been assigned to watch the Apostle Paul, and who had been saved through his ministry? Were they slaves or freedmen who worked in the palace? Or might the expression include some officials of the Roman government? We cannot know with certainty, but here we have a lovely illustration of the truth that Christians, like spiders, find their way into king's palaces ([Pro 30:28](#))! The gospel knows no boundaries. It can penetrate the most forbidding walls. It can plant itself in the very midst of those who are seeking to exterminate it. Truly, the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church of Jesus Christ!*

2. Amen! In the days in which we live, we may in fact feel like “they that are of Caesar’s household!”
3. Be encouraged! Nothing can stop the building of Christ’s church. If it be His will to return us to a more “Acts” environment where Christians live with a minority posture, let us infiltrate world systems and paradigms with the light of Christ!

Amen!