



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL
SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:10-13
DATE: JULY 12, 2026

INTRODUCTION

We are now on week 11 of our series through Philippians. We only have a few more lessons to go. As we turn to some of our final lessons, we see Paul expressing some of his primary reasons for writing this letter.

In many ways, Paul's letter was much like a thank you note to the Philippians. Paul had received a gift from the church through Epaphroditus. He is expressing his thanks for the gift and sending his gospel-partnership friend back to the church.

In our lesson today, Paul remarks how he rejoices at the gift he has received. At the same time, he uses this as an opportunity to call the church to imitate him discipline of contentment.

Text

Philippians 4:10-13

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content. ¹² 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. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Explanation

Gratitude

If you have followed along throughout this series, you know that Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. Though separated from the Philippians, his concern for them never diminished. Throughout the letter, Paul repeatedly expresses his deep affection for this church. Consider just a few examples:

- **1:7** – "It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart..."
- **1:8** – "For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus."
- **1:25–26** – "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith..."
- **2:17–18** – "Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all."

Paul even mentioned sending Timothy so that he could be encouraged by hearing how they were doing (2:19). There is no question that Paul genuinely loved this church and cared deeply for their spiritual well-being.

The Philippians shared that same concern for Paul. Their concern, however, was not merely emotional or sentimental—it was demonstrated through sacrificial action. They sent Epaphroditus to deliver a financial gift to support Paul during his imprisonment (4:18). Their love expressed itself through generous giving.

Paul tells them, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me." Their gift was more than a simple donation. Paul viewed it as evidence of a church eager not merely to fulfill an obligation, but to excel in caring for him. The phrase "at length" suggests deliberate effort and perseverance. The gift itself was significant, but so was the sacrifice involved in delivering it. Epaphroditus nearly lost his life fulfilling this mission (2:27–30), demonstrating just how committed both he and the church were to serving Paul.

This was not the first time the Philippians had supported Paul. By saying their concern had "revived," Paul implies that they had helped him on previous occasions as well. Their generosity was not an isolated act but a consistent pattern of gospel partnership. We see glimpses of the Philippians previous giving when Paul reported to the Corinthians about them. He wrote about them in 2 Corinthians 8:1–5,

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

Paul also recognizes that although they had always cared for him, they previously lacked the opportunity to help. We are not told exactly what prevented them. Perhaps their own poverty limited them, or perhaps circumstances made it impossible to deliver assistance. Whatever the obstacle, they did not simply wait for the perfect opportunity to appear. When the opportunity became available, they intentionally acted. Their generosity was marked by initiative rather than convenience. They made the opportunity instead of waiting for ideal circumstances.

Contentment

Although Paul expresses sincere gratitude, he is careful not to leave the wrong impression. He does not want the Philippians to think that his joy depended on receiving their gift or that he had been living in discontent before it arrived. Instead, Paul turns this moment into a teaching opportunity. As he often does throughout this letter, he uses his own life as an example because he desires

the Philippians to imitate him (3:17). One area in which they should follow his example is contentment.

Remarkably, Paul says that even while sitting in prison, he had learned to be content. He writes that he knew how to live with abundance and how to endure need. He had experienced seasons of plenty as well as seasons of hunger, yet his inner peace remained the same. Notice Paul's language carefully. He says he *learned* contentment. This is encouraging because contentment is not simply a personality trait that some people naturally possess. It is a spiritual discipline that God teaches His people over time.

Paul even speaks of a "secret" to contentment. That secret is not found in having more possessions, greater financial security, or easier circumstances. The secret is found in depending upon Christ's strength. This leads to one of the most familiar verses in Scripture: "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Because this verse is so familiar, it is often quoted apart from its context. Many people use it to describe accomplishing difficult goals, overcoming obstacles, or achieving success. While God certainly strengthens His people for difficult tasks, Paul's point here is more specific. The immediate context is contentment. Paul is saying that Christ gives him strength to remain faithful whether he has abundance or whether he has nothing at all. He can be content whether the difficult goals aren't accomplished or whether the obstacles aren't overcome.

Paul had discovered that God's strength was more essential than even life's basic necessities. This reflects truths taught throughout Scripture. Moses reminded Israel, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3). Likewise, Jesus taught His disciples not to be anxious about food, clothing, or daily needs, but instead to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," trusting that the Father knows what they need (Matt. 6:31–33).

The same principle is at work in Philippians 4:13. Paul's confidence is not that God will always remove hardship, but that God will always provide the strength necessary to seek His kingdom faithfully in every circumstance.

This truth has important practical implications. It is not uncommon for Christians to think they must first have all of their personal needs met before they can faithfully serve the Lord. Sometimes we reason, "Once life settles down... once finances improve... once my circumstances become easier... then I will fully serve God."

Paul's perspective is exactly the opposite. He would say, "I will serve Christ whether I have plenty or little because Christ Himself gives me the strength to do so." Rather than placing obedience after comfort, Paul placed obedience first, trusting that God would faithfully provide what he truly needed along the way.

It is also important to understand what Paul means by "all things." The context defines the promise. Paul is saying that through Christ's strength, believers can faithfully endure every circumstance they encounter while living for God's kingdom. There is no hardship, disappointment, or trial that can ultimately prevent us from glorifying Christ. And truth be told, it is not just the hardships that can make being content difficult. Admittedly, we can struggle with contentment when we experience plenty and have an abundance. It is so easy to always be searching for more even when we have all that we need.

Christians sometimes misuse this verse by applying it to promises God never made. Certainly God's kingdom affects every area of our lives—our work, our education, our family, our recreation, and even our sports. But Philippians 4:13 is not a promise that we will always succeed according to worldly standards.

The promise is that we can faithfully make Christ known whether we win or lose the game, whether we pass or fail the exam, whether our career advances or stalls, whether sickness comes or health remains. We can glorify Christ in seasons of abundance and in seasons of suffering because His strength is always sufficient. Our circumstances may change, but Christ's enabling power never does. That is the secret of true contentment.

Discussion Questions

- When you are in need, who is first to come to your help: Yourself, family, friends, others?
- How well would you say that you receive help? Are you quick to refuse help or quick to accept help?
- Do you ever find yourself in a situation where you want to help but not sure how?
- Do you think that contentment leads to joy or does joy lead to contentment?

- How would you currently describe yourself: having abundance or being in need?
- Sometimes when we are in abundance we can forget our need of God; other times when we are in great need, we might think that God is punishing us or is absent. Which would you say you are more prone towards?
- How do you think a person goes about learning contentment?
- Are you more prone to think that God get glory when you win and give him credit for the win, or when you lose and you still praise him?
- Have you ever experienced a season when God's strength became especially evident because your own resources were insufficient? What did the Lord teach you through that experience?
- Paul learned to be content in both abundance and need. Which of those is more difficult for you to handle faithfully? Why?
- What do you think is the relationship between contentment and generosity?

Conclusions or Applications

GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN

Some of the Bible's most well-known verses on contentment is 1 Timothy 6:6-8: "But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content."

These verses remind us that all our possessions are inherently a gift from God. Life itself should be considered a gift. Realizing that all our possession are gifts reminds us to be content with what we have been given.

Furthermore, these verses also teach us that all our gifts are temporary. We only have them while we live on earth. We entered life with nothing and we will certainly leave this life with nothing. Therefore, we should use the gifts we have, and while we have them, for godliness. Our aim is not just to spend them on ourselves.

Contentment results in great gain. This may seem like a paradox, but the true path to gain isn't through a desire to get rich. True gain comes through contentment and generosity.