**THE SECRET OF BEING CONTENT**

Philippians 4:10-23

Key verse 12

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”

**Introduction**



 This last part is about Paul’s thank-you letter to the Philippians for the gifts they have sent him through Epaphroditus. Here we find Paul’s attitude toward giving and receiving. Especially we can learn the secret of being content from the apostle Paul. May the Lord help us to have the secret of being content.

1. Read verses 10-13. Why did Paul greatly rejoice? (10) What can we learn from Paul who learned to be content whatever the circumstances? (11) What was the secret of his contentment? (12-13)

 1-1, Read verses 10-13.

 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. **11** I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. **12** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13** I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

1-2, Why did Paul greatly rejoice? (10)

 ***I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.***

* Paul greatly rejoices in the Lord that their concern for him and for God’s work has been renewed.
* He values their friendship and wants to see their active participation in gospel work.
* This refers to the financial support brought by Epaphroditus.

Philippians 2:25 reads,

 “But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.”

* Paul didn’t want to imply that the Philippians didn’t care before, only that before they lacked opportunity.

1-3, What can we learn from Paul who learned to be content whatever the circumstances? (11)

 ***I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.***

* Paul is free from bondage to material things. To be content means that one accepts with gratitude the life God has given him to live.
* Paul reminded the Philippians that his thankfulness for the Philippians’ giving wasn’t because he was needy (though he was in fact in need), but because it was good for them to be givers.
* He does not envy anyone or want to change either places or situations with anybody.

1-4, What was the secret of his contentment? (12-13)

***12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.***

* This was how Paul could say that his thankfulness was not based upon his own need.
* Even though Paul was in need, he was content where he was at – even in his Roman imprisonment. I have learned: Paul had to learn contentment.
* Paul reminds us that his contentment was not only theoretical. He actually lived what he preached.
* We see how powerfully the grace of Christ supported him always.
* How few of those who are called to be God’s servants have learned this important lesson!
* Again Paul’s hardships and prison life would cause him to complain and grumble. But we cannot find any hint of complaint in this letter. How did Paul learn this secret?
* **“I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”** The source of secret is through Christ.
* Here the word ‘strength’ is ‘dunamis’ in Greek. The word refers to “strength, power or ability.” It is the root word of our English words dynamite and dynamic.
* I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me: This refers to Paul’s ability to be content in all things.
* To achieve this contentment, he needed the strength of Jesus Christ.
* Unfortunately, many people take(isolate) this verse out of context instead of seeing that the strength of Jesus in Paul’s life was evident.
* We must always also put this precious statement of faith in connection. It reminds us of two passages as follows;

John 15:5 reads,

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;apart from me you can do nothing.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 reads,

 “You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” **18** But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.”

* Paul relied on the strength that Christ empowered him with. Paul did not try to live a Christian life through his own strength, only to burn out.
* He drew his strength from Jesus. We can also draw strength in Jesus to rejoice always.
* We can draw strength in Jesus to forgive and to love. We can draw strength from Christ to overcome times of want. We can draw strength in Christ to overcome temptations in times of abundance.
* In Christ Jesus our minds and hearts are guarded by the peace of God. We must turn to Jesus in every circumstance and ask for his help and guidance.
* We must be humble enough to learn to depend on him, not on ourselves. This was Paul’s secret of victory.

2. Read verses 14-19. Why did Paul express his appreciation for the giving-service of the Philippians from the beginning? (14-16) What was his real desire? (17) How did Paul highly value their gift? (18) What happens to those who give? (19)

2-1, Read verses 14-19.

Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. **15** Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; **16** for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. **17** Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. **18** I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. **19** And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

2-2, Why did Paul express his appreciation for the giving-service of the Philippians from the beginning? (14-16)

 ***Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.***

* Paul remembered how the church in Philippi had shared in his gospel ministry through their giving in the past.
* The Philippian Christians had been a giving church from the beginning. They were not selfish. They had world mission vision. So they prayed for Paul and sent him aid again and again when he was in need.

2-3, What was his real desire? (17)

 ***17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.***

* Paul was grateful for the gifts the Philippians sent, for they supplied his needs. But he wanted them to understand that giving is a spiritual exercise that always benefits the one who gives more than the one who receives.

Acts 20:35b says,

 “remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

2-4, How did Paul highly value their gift? (18)

***18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.***

* A benefit-seeking Christian is not really a Christian, for he is evidently not aware of God’s grace in his life.
* As God’s people, we must be people who give to others. We give others as an act of worship to God.

2-5, What happens to those who give? (19)

 ***And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.***

* We have received grace from God that we can never repay. He gave his one and only Son to die on the cross so that we might be forgiven.
* We can never repay the debt we owe him. He saved us so that we might live unselfish lives, serving God and our fellow man.
* According to His riches in glory, God fills all our needs as Elisha helped a widow.
* All your needs - We also notice that this promise was made to the Philippians – those who had surrendered their finances and material possessions to God’s service, and who knew how to give with the right kind of heart.

Luke 6:38 reads,

 “Give, and it will be given to you: A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

3. Read verses 20-23. How did Paul praise God? (20) What were Paul’s final greetings? (21-22) Who did he mention in particular among all of God’s people? (22b) What can we learn from his final remark? (23)

3-1, Read verses 20-23.

To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. **21** Greet all God’s people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. **22** All God’s people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar’s household. **23** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

3-2, How did Paul praise God? (20)

 ***To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.***

* Paul genuinely wanted God to be glorified and was willing to be used in whatever way God saw fit to glorify Himself
* “Amen” means “So be it!”

3-2, What were Paul’s final greetings? (21-22)

 ***Greet all God’s people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. 22 All God’s people here send you greetings,***

* Here, Paul did not give greetings to specific individuals as he did in other letters. Rather, he greeted all God’s people in Christ Jesus. This applies to all Christians.

3-3, Who did he mention in particular among all of God’s people? (22b)

 ***especially those who belong to Caesar’s household.***

* All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household: This special greeting is evidence that Paul was still used by God during his Roman imprisonment, when the gospel extended even into the household of Caesar.
* Nero was at this time emperor of Rome: a more worthless, cruel, and diabolic wretch; yet there were Christians in his family.
* That is why we are boldly praying for North Korea, Radically Islamic countries, ISIS dominated territories, or troubled countries because God prepared His holy people as remnants! Amen!

3-4, What can we learn from his final remark? (23)

 ***The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.***

* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all - Paul did not say this to simply fill up space at the end of his letter.
* To him, the Christian life begins and ends with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so it was appropriate that his letters began and ended with grace also.
* Amen: This was a fitting word of affirmation. Paul knew that what he wrote to the Philippians was worthy to be accepted by the entire church, thus he added this final word of agreement.

**Conclusion**

 In today’s passage, the phrase ‘in the Lord’ is repeated six times. “Stand firm in the Lord”, “the same mind in the Lord”, “rejoice in the Lord always”, “the peace of God in Christ Jesus”, “the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus”, and “greet in Christ Jesus.” The secret is Jesus. The answer is Jesus. As we hold on to Jesus and remain in him, joy, peace and contentment will overflow from our hearts. May God give us a burning desire to learn of Jesus!

**One word: The Secret found only in Jesus!**