



Sermon Series: Character Counts

To be used with Session 4: Contentment

Sermon Title Possibilities: “Work with What You’ve Got!”

Scripture: Philippians 4:10-20

Connection To Unit Theme: This sermon is designed to complement the Bible study “Contentment.” One of the biggest enemies to those seeking to live with godly character is the curse of comparison. Many a person has abandoned their moral principles in an effort to match or surpass someone else. It is not difficult to shift motivations and become more obsessed with keeping up with others rather than obeying God’s will for our lives. This is a very dangerous direction, which is why this lesson gives us insight on the importance of contentment. One can be content in Christ alone. Jesus is more than enough. Invite your congregation to consider this individually and collectively as we examine Paul’s words.

Introduction: Several years ago, my late pastor asked me to help our home church revamp the Children and Youth Ministry. Several people suggested seeking outside help and trying to hire additional individuals to aid in the effort. However, my first course action was to call a Zoom meeting of the remaining children, youth, and parents. I deemed it necessary to have a grasp on what we had left before trying to do anything else. As it turned out, we already had a significant number of young people and volunteers, they simply hadn’t had anything to do. I would not have discovered that had I not first assessed what we already had. The apostle Paul uses today’s lesson to teach us of the dangers of looking elsewhere for things when often, we already have what we need. We just need to steward it better. In this instance, the question is how are we stewarding our character?

Philippians 4:10-12a – No Matter What, Its All Good!

Life is full of difficulties and challenges. There are plenty of situations in which we desire things to be better, and we even find ourselves looking at others and thinking they have it better than we do. Difficulty has a way of convincing us that other people are better off than us, even if they aren’t. We say things like, “If I had their life, I would be so much happier.” In short, we sometimes base our view of life on how our current circumstances and realities are. If our money is good, then life is good. If our money is low, then life is low.

The apostle Paul talks to the church of Phillipi about the importance of trusting God and being content despite the circumstances. True contentment with God is there despite our situations.

One can be content while still in a less-than-ideal situation. This isn't to say that one enjoys it or isn't striving for better, but our trust in God is such that we realize this is only for a season. And the reality is that we are better off in bad times with God than in good times without Him. God is challenging us to get to a place where we trust His timing, His pacing, and all His moves. If our level of contentment shifts with our circumstances, then it behooves us to check in to that, because that is not true contentment.

Philippians 4:12 b-14 –Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus!

"Can't nobody do me like Jesus! Can't nobody do me like The Lord! Can't nobody do me like Jesus! He's my friend!" There aren't many churches that haven't sang this song at least once, and it can completely shift the atmosphere of a worship service. The song testifies to the faithfulness of our Savior and how no human being anywhere can match what He does or who He is. This is both an encouragement to those of us in difficult situations, as well as a reminder to those of us tempted to depend on others rather than Jesus. No one can match what He can do.

As Paul teaches about contentment in Christ, He is laying the foundational sentiments for the song that we opened with. It takes true contentment to testify that can't nobody do us like Jesus. And it takes true faith to say that even in difficult situations. Yet Paul testifies in verses 12-14 that not only has he learned to be content in any situation, but he has experienced both abundance and lack and yet never wavered in his faith. While much easier said than done at times, The Lord expects the same level of faith from each of us. It's easy to have contentment when the circumstances are desirable, but the true test of our faith and contentment occurs in those seasons of lack, delay, disappointment, and pain. However, no one can bring us through those seasons like Jesus can.

Philippians 4:15-20 –Thank You for Being a Friend!

"Thank you for being a friend. Traveled down a road and back again. Your heart is true. You're a pal and a confidante." By now you're probably singing along and picturing the opening to *The Golden Girls*. This simple, yet beautiful song was originally written and sung by Andrew Gold and then covered by Cynthia Fee for the beloved sitcom. The song expresses a profound appreciation to a true, loyal, and abiding friend. It demonstrates a clear understanding of the role of a friend, as well as a genuine sense of gratitude for having continually received it.

While most of Paul's writings are to provide guidance and instruction, he takes verses 15-20 to express appreciation to those that held him up during some of his roughest seasons. Paul is truly grateful and in a similar fashion to the opening of *The Golden Girls*, he wants to make sure he gives those who were kind to him their flowers. The Philippians had been kind and generous, and Paul promised that God not only saw that but would bless them for it. In a likewise manner, God rewards our kindness to others. While we should never be kind in hopes of receiving

rewards, it is imperative that we remember that it matters how we treat people. That is a crucial element of Godly character.

Conclusion: God has blessed with a lot. It may not feel like it sometimes, but many of us truly don't realize how blessed we are. However, we serve a God that can always do more. He has an unlimited supply and is not bound by anyone or anything. As we said in an earlier message, "if you need it, Gods got it!" The point of contentment is not only being grateful to God for what we already have, but trusting that in His own way and time, He will provide. That's why the songwriter said, "He will provide. He will provide. In God's own time, come rain or shine, He will provide!" Work what you've got, and watch God handle the rest.

Author Bio

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