



3/27/26

In this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, we talked about finding contentment through Jesus and not our circumstances. One thing that blows me away is that Paul said he LEARNED to be content in any and every circumstance. Then, in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, he explained that it was God's grace that gave him the power to be content even in his weaknesses. He said, "Because of Jesus, I am CONTENT with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities." Whoa!!! How in the world could he be content like that? Well, he couldn't be content like that if he had the mindset of the world. Hopefully, today's podcast will explain his secret. If you'd like to listen, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

I'm going to see in today's passage that the evidence of my faith, speech, and knowledge of God will be displayed in my generosity. Why? Because I'm so content in the Lord and I love Him and my brothers and sisters in Christ so much that I don't give out of obligation, but I give out of the abundance of joy that only comes in abiding in Christ (John 15:1-11).

So... Paul was writing to the Corinthian Church about a gift they had pledged to give for other believers in need. Paul understood that making a promise but not carrying it out is both damaging to the would-be recipients of the gift, but also it's damaging to the one who doesn't follow through on the promise. Choosing not to follow through can be motivated by many things... either "I just don't want to" or "I've realized that keeping my promise will mean I have to do without my pleasures, and I like my comfort" or "What if I give and then something bad happens and I can't fix it?" or "I have nothing worth giving because I'm such a loser." But in every case, the choice not to give will make me pull away from the Lord who is the source of my joy.

So Paul was sending Titus to help the Corinthian Church prepare their gift... so that they

wouldn't be embarrassed. He called our giving "a grace of God." Why is it a grace of God if I'm giving of my stuff? Because I only have that stuff by God's grace. Recognizing that it all comes from Him is His grace.

Paul spoke of the churches of Macedonia. They were so excited to help relieve the needs of other believers that they joyfully gave "in a wealth of generosity" even though they had no wealth. They gave from their poverty, beyond their means, "BEGGING for the privilege of helping the saints... believers in Christ."

Paul said he was shocked by such giving. It was unexpected. What was most beautiful to him was not the gift, but the fact that they "gave themselves first to the Lord." It was only when they submitted themselves wholeheartedly to the Lord that they knew it was His will that they gave to Paul for the relieving, not of Paul's needs, but of the needs of other believers.

Paul sent Timothy to the Corinthian Church so that they could experience the same joy as the churches at Macedonia. He knew the same thing that Mordecai said to Esther when she was afraid to help save her people from annihilation in Esther 4:14, "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place..." God WILL provide for the needs of His people with or without me. But I'M the one who misses out if I don't offer myself to be part of His plan. I miss the joy.

How can I give so generously? Only if I'm absolutely content in the Lord... only if I absolutely trust His plan... only if I say, "Not MY will be done, but YOUR will be done."

My prayer is that I will excel in...

- Faith... completely confident that God is who He says He is and does what He says will do... that anything I give from a generous heart in faith will bring me the blessing of deeper joy in Him.
- Speech... speaking what is true. God's word is true. Let me excel in both speaking and living the truth in love.
- Knowledge... experientially knowing God, not just knowing His word for information but for transformation.
- All earnestness... diligence. My faith, speech, and knowledge will fall short if I'm not diligent to pursue the Lord.

Paul also spoke of them excelling in his love for them. That's a pretty cool way to say it. He abundantly loved them because HIS faith, speech, knowledge, and earnestness excelled for the Lord.

The grace of God is so beautiful. It is the generosity of His love. Its root word is the same word we get for the word "charity." I can give with grace because God's grace is lavished on me. It's when I give myself first and wholeheartedly to the Lord that I grow and excel in all

that comes from Him. O Lord, my first pursuit is NOT that I give generously to others, but that I give myself to YOU. It's when I offer myself to You that I grow so close to You I can't help but give to others and keep my promises to them according to Your will. Please help me to keep coming to You, sitting at Your feet... learning from You... being changed by You.