



9/24/26

I can't help but think about the women's study coming up next week, Truth and Lies. Let me just say... The gospel is the truth. Anything else is a lie. I pray that you and I will embrace the truth of the gospel and root out anything that doesn't point us to Jesus!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Philippians 4:10-20

Today we finish the letter to the Philippians. Throughout this letter I saw such a mutual love between Paul and these believers. That's what a relationship with God brings. It's never just about me. It's never just about you. It's always about US. Even with the Lord, He's always caring for His people, His kids. He gives more to us than we could ever give to Him. When I truly understand that, it motivates my love for others and my care for their needs. I see this mindset in what Paul writes here. I learn from Paul and I learn from the saints in Christ at Phillippi.

In vs. 10, I learn Paul's joy and the believers' generosity born from love. Paul said, "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."

It almost looks like Paul was saying they stopped caring for him, but that's not really it. They WANTED to provide for his needs. I know from vs. 14-18 that they "shared his trouble". They felt the weight of his affliction as if it was their own. So they did whatever they could to help. They were the only ones who helped "in the beginning of the gospel" when Paul left Macedonia. They were the only church that "entered into partnership with Paul in giving and receiving."

Side note... I think it's really cool that he mentioned both giving and receiving. Mutual relationship includes both. Some people are willing to give but not receive. That makes it hard to connect with them. Mutual relationship needs connection in both ways. Is it pride that prevents someone from being willing to receive care from someone else? Some people only want

to receive but not give. Being on the giving end of that kind of relationship is hard and exhausting. Paul celebrated that these believers were in full fellowship with him, receiving the Spirit led teaching and love he poured into them, and giving to his needs so that he could continue that ministry to others... so that more people could know Jesus as Savior and Lord. That's just cool. I want to be part of that kind of relationship with the body of Christ.

Paul continued speaking of how they provided for his needs in vs. 16. He said, "Even in Thessalonica you sent me help... TWICE!" Thessalonica was 100 miles away with no cars or trains or buses. They were so generous because they loved Paul and this was a way they could show it. They also loved seeing the gospel spread to others. That's what the love of Jesus does to our hearts. It expands our hearts to care for people we don't even know... yet. Someday we'll meet them in heaven.

Paul said that he had received the generous gifts they sent to him through Epaphroditus. He was decked out with more than enough. I see from vs. 18 that this was not only about Paul. The gifts they sent were also and more importantly, to honor the Lord. Their gift was "a fragrant offering, a SACRIFICE acceptable and pleasing TO GOD." Our love for God, as it grows, grows our love for each other. We get to have the joy of knowing that our generosity to each other is pleasure to Him. Jesus said, "When you've done it unto the least of these my brothers, you've done it unto Me."

So... how did Paul see these gifts from the Philippians? Was he relieved by their gifts? Had he panicked in fear that the Lord would not provide? No. In vs. 11-12 he said, "Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content. 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." He said, "I'm content even if I don't receive the gifts from you." HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE???

He said, "I have LEARNED the secret of contentment." How do you learn something? PRACTICE. That means Paul was put in LOTS of situations where he didn't have his physical needs met for quite a while. Somehow, the Lord taught him contentment and satisfaction whether he was brought low or amply supplied, whether he had plenty to eat or he had very little to eat. What was it that God taught him through this PRACTICE of dependence on God even when he didn't know where his next meal was coming from? God taught him vs. 13, "I can do ALL things through HIM who strengthens me." Everybody say, "That's my God!" He's the one who spoke the world into existence and who holds the universe together by the word of His power.

Is this a lesson I want to learn? Do I want contentment? Yes, I absolutely want to be content. Well... the way to get there is to LEARN that my contentment will not come from my circumstances. The only way to learn that is to experience times of being brought low and times of need. Those times teach me what Paul said he learned in 2 Corinthians 1:9, to rely on the Lord for every deliverance from every situation. Paul was not saying that he took pleasure in hard circumstances. He was saying that hard circumstances could not ruin him because his

hope wasn't in his circumstances but in his Lord. Is that where my hope is?

O Lord, You know that my answer is "yes, I want to learn this contentment... I want You to be my strength." You also know that my first response to being brought low and being in need is to get anxious and to question whether You're here with me. I guess I'm in the process of learning. I praise You for Your patience and mercy. I know that when I rely on You even in my need, You WILL strengthen my faith, You WILL guard my heart and my mind with incomprehensible peace. AND... as Paul said to the Philippians in vs. 19, You "will supply EVERY need of mine ACCORDING to Your RICHES in glory in Christ Jesus."

So... if Paul was content in the Lord, strengthened by Him, and trusting Him to supply his needs, why was he so happy about the Philippians providing for him? He said in vs. 17, "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit." Paul was excited to see how their love for the Lord was making them more fruitful as believers in Christ. In John 15:8 Jesus said, "By this My Father is glorified, if you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples." The fruit of their gifts proved that they wanted to glorify God and show their loyalty to Him.

Paul was so NOT selfish! Contentment comes with humility. O Lord, this is a huge calling... learning contentment takes humility. Please dislodge all the arrogance from my heart. Help me to learn contentment like Paul did whatever the cost (I say with trepidation). And help me to love You so much and trust You so much that I generously and lovingly care for others as often as You give me opportunity. As with Paul, let it be all for one reason... Your glory. Your glory is my good. You are with me. You are my peace. You are my strength. You know my need and meet it, even when I can't see where it's coming from. "To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."