

# Content in Christ

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristchurchEastBay.org. Good morning, Christchurch. My name is Carrie Moulton, and I'm a member of the Welcome Team.

And today's reading is a letter from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 4, verses 10 through 23. 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. I'm not saying this because I'm in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

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 every and any situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

[ 1 : 13 ] I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 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.

For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts. What I desire is that more to be credited to your account.

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

And my God will meet you in all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

[ 2 : 32 ] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God. Let's pray.

Lord God, we ask that in the preaching of your word, that you would convince us that Christ is enough.

That he is more than enough, that he is everything. And Father, would you show us what that means for how we not just should live, but how we can live as those who are united with him.

God, give us that kind of faith and fill the world with that kind of joy. That we pray through your son, for his sake and in his name. Amen.

All right, guys. So we've made it to the last 14 verses in Paul's letter to the church in Philippi. We finally got there. And, you know, today we have probably some of Paul's, like, most famous, most loved, most memorized passages, like, of all time.

[ 3 : 43 ] I can do all things through him who gives me strength. I've learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus.

These are the verses I grew up memorizing at Vacation Bible School. These are the kinds of verses that you see on inspirational posters, right, and on coffee mugs and stitched into your coat, or maybe even on Steph Curry's sneakers, right?

I can do all things. These are incredible verses, and they're very well loved, and for good reason, right? And, you know, I feel a little anxious coming up here today because, like, I totally am not able

to do justice to the power and the beauty of what God's Word reveals to us today.

But we're going to try, all right? And to do that, we need to understand the occasion of this letter, okay? Just on the last sermon in this series, we want to get at what was the occasion for this sermon, and it's this.

Remember, this is Paul's first church plant in Europe, right? And they've not only grown, but they've become established. They're established now, and from the very beginning, they've been a very generous church.

[ 4 : 48 ] They've partnered with Paul in planning churches, financially supporting him. Verse 16 tells us that it was Philippian dollars that went toward the next Macedonian church plant in Thessalonica.

In Paul's letter to Corinth, we find out that the churches in Philippi and Thessalonica, even out of their extreme poverty, they sent aid to Paul as he worked as a tent maker and did not receive a salary from the church in Corinth.

So this church, Philippi, has a very special place in his heart. And now even more so that he is in prison. And remember, the Roman prisons, they didn't provide your basic necessities.

If you wanted to survive, you were dependent upon outside support. And that's what the Philippian church sent to Apostle Paul, this guy Epaphroditus, right? They sent this guy in an age without Venmo, PayPal, FedEx, or UPS.

They sent this guy on an over 700-mile trip to deliver a gift to Paul, and this guy almost dies on the way, all right? But ultimately, he makes it. He gives Paul the gift, and it all makes it to Paul.

[ 5 : 50 ] But also in this age, without, you know, instant messaging, without the Internet, the church in Philippi is worried sick about Paul, and now also about Epaphroditus, who they're not even sure if he's made it, right?

So this is the occasion for the letter to the church in Philippi. It wasn't just some, like, really bored apostle sitting in prison thinking, hmm, let me just try to write some doctrine and theology and send it to the church in Philippi, and hopefully the church will study it for the next 2,000 years.

No. This is a guy who loves this church. It's a very personal letter. He's writing to let them know that he's okay, that Epaphroditus is okay, that Epaphroditus made it, and also, thanks for the gift, guys. But you know what's interesting about this ending, or really the whole letter of Philippians is that, and many commentators observe this, is that Paul never explicitly thanks them for the gift.

Like, hey, thanks for the gift, guys. One or two commentators even suggest that Paul is kind of ungrateful. If you look at this whole letter and don't see this gift, that was keeping him pretty much alive, right?

[ 6 : 53 ] And I'm not going to enter into that argument. I do think it's clear that Paul is thankful to the Philippians. He expresses it in his own way. But again, remember, this is the apostle Paul, all right? That's not his main concern.

This is the guy who wrote, And count them as what?

Rubbish. Jonathan's favorite word? Scubala, right? Scubala. So we shouldn't expect him to, like, be, you know, kissing the feet of the Philippian church for hooking him up in prison.

No. He is single-mindedly preoccupied with Jesus and with Jesus' mission. So it makes sense why Paul writes this letter in the way he does. If we're growing in our familiarity with who he is and what's on his heart, it should make sense to us that his heart isn't simply to write, Thank you for the money letters, okay?

No, it's to pastor this generous and this worried gospel-loving church and to encourage them and to challenge them as citizens of the kingdom of Christ. So really to overemphasize the thank you part would be to undermine what his primary message and plan has been all along.

[ 8 : 05 ] And that message is that Jesus plus nothing equals everything. Jesus plus nothing equals everything. So yes, Paul is clearly thankful in these last verses, But what he is more eager to do than thank Philippi for supplying his need is to point Philippi to their riches in Christ.

The Savior, right, who truly, fully, and richly supplies all of our needs. More than saying thank you for the gift, Paul has a gift he wants to bestow upon this church.

And I like to think of this gift as pretty much the gift of invincibility, or Paul calls it the secret of contentment. And so that's what we're going to be considering today. What is the secret of contentment? And like the deepest kind, the deepest kind of contentment, like the no matter what circumstances kind of contentment.

Is it possible? Is it real? And if it is, what are the possibilities if it is real? How might such contentment free us from fear and anxiety and our scarcity mentalities?

And how might such contentment release us into joyful, courageous, and I wouldn't even say God-like generosity? In our text today, Paul says it is real. And it's for you to have and enjoy, and of course, it's in Christ.

[ 9 : 14 ] So these are our three points this morning. The secret of contentment, the joy of generosity, and the power of grace. The secret of contentment, the joy of generosity, and the power of grace. So first, the secret of contentment.

Paul says in verse 10, So this is kind of like his thank you. I was filled with joy that at last you really were concerned for me.

And don't get me wrong. He says, I know you always were concerned for me, but you just didn't have the opportunity to show it. This is his closest thing to gratitude. I rejoice that you were concerned for me. But notice what he's rejoicing in.

He's not rejoicing so much in the gift, in the money, in the food. He's rejoicing in their loving concern for him. What he cares about more than his financial needs being met is their relationship and their growth in faith and in generosity.

But then almost as soon as he expresses a tiny bit of gratitude for their gift and concern, he wants to make something very clear to them. Verse 11, I'm not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

[ 10 : 17 ] Like, let me be clear. The gift brought me joy. Yeah, but you need to know that my joy is not dependent upon your gift. Okay? I was always going to be fine. I was never truly in real and ultimate need.

And you know why? Because I have learned the secret of being content no matter what the circumstances. And trust me, I've experienced the spectrum of circumstances, he tells him in verse 12. I know what it is to be in need.

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. And so what's the secret? Verse 13, I can do all things, not in and of my own strength, my own competency, or through my own mental toughness and ability to reframe and reinterpret my circumstances.

But simply, I can do all things simply through him, through Christ, who gives me strength. Strength from Christ. That's a secret.

[ 11 : 15 ] That's a secret of contentment according to the Apostle Paul. But now you're probably thinking, right? Of course the pastor's going to say that. Of course the pastor's going to tell me that. Give me the spiritual answer.

Jesus is always the answer. The opiate of the masses. Sure, that's going to pay my bills. That's going to take away my cancer. That's going to end my depression, mend my marriage, redeem all my mistakes, turn my life around.

Sure, that'll give me peace. Okay, Apostle Paul, what else do you want to try to sell me, right? And listen, I hear you. I feel that myself. Like honestly, Philippians chapter 4, verse 13, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength, has become super cliché amongst Christians.

I probably had that t-shirt as a corny, you know, evangelical little boy growing up, right? Right? It's on Steph Curry's sneakers. High school football players in the South use it to hype each other up before each game, right?

And it's kind of become a pious, kind of Christianese version of, you know, for Chinese people in here, jiao yo, right? You can do it. I can do this. I got this, right? And if you have no patience for that, you're right.

[ 12 : 20 ] I don't either. But please know that this isn't what Paul is saying here in verse 13. He's not saying follow Jesus and life gets easy. And he has zero interest in preaching some kind of magical genie version of Jesus who enables us to do anything and everything that our hearts desire.

No, actually, Paul is saying something even more radical, offering something even crazier, a strength from Christ that isn't dependent on circumstances at all.

A strength that doesn't make you immune from everything, but a strength that holds you fast and keeps you content even when your immune system breaks down. A strength that anchors you when your bank account drops to zero, when your test results return positive, when your tank is running on empty.

That's what he's offering. Now, you maybe might still feel incredulous. I get it. But don't you at least want this to be true? Don't you at least want this to be real?

And consider all the other options and just ask yourself, don't you want to have this kind of strength and contentment in your life if it is real? And even if you're tilted toward doubt and unbelief, aren't you at least a little interested in what Christianity has to say about this?

[13:37] That's what I'm here to share with you. And one thing I want to point out is that Paul doesn't just say, I'm content because Jesus. No, he says that he's learned the secret of contentment. The secret.

So really, it actually makes sense why this Christian understanding of contentment doesn't make sense to a whole lot of people. It's because it's a secret. It's not obvious. It doesn't comport with our experience of this broken world and our sinful humanity.

Contentment is a secret because none of us wakes up content. Right? If anything, it's actually the opposite. We're always wanting more, we're never fully and forever satisfied, and it drives us nuts because deep down, we at the same time also believe that we were made to be satisfied, to be content.

Now, why is that? Where did this paradox come from? Well, what if I told you that only the Christian story can make sense of this paradox?

C.S. Lewis writes, Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger. Well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim. Well, there is such a thing as water.

[14:46] Men feel sexual desire. Well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world where my desires can be filled.

See, the naturalistic, godless story, it simply says that we wake up discontent every day because we are living in a rat race where it's survival of the fittest. Right? And the chief end of man is to survive for as long as possible.

The chief end of man is to delay death and prolong life. But for some reason, we of all creatures are like super conscious of death and we live our lives in terror of it, often so terrified of death that we do terrible things to delay it.

All the horrifying things that you see in the news that human beings do to one another, ultimately, we do that to delay death and to prolong life for ourselves. For ourselves.

In the face of death, we're all scrambling to push off death a little bit further by any means possible. Ernest Becker, he's not a Christian.

[15:53] He wasn't a Christian. He's a secular. He was a secular cultural anthropologist. And he described this uniquely human quality really well in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Denial of Death*.

And basically, he observed that this is what makes the human condition so strange. We are unique among creatures because we know we're going to die. And we can't stop thinking about it.

That knowledge haunts us. We long to live forever, he says. Yet we live under the shadow of death every single day. So what do we do? We spend our lives trying to deny it.

We build achievements, legacies, reputations. We chase youth, beauty, and power. We invent distractions so we don't have to face the truth. And in the end, the irony is brutal. The harder we try to escape death, actually, the more anxious and enslaved we become.

So in this story, we just do our best to try to deny death. Or maybe some of us tell ourselves that death is okay. It's natural. It's just a part of the circle of life. Thinking ourselves to be wise and brave rather than crazy.

[16:57] And this is what the Stoics of Paul's day did. Don't fear death. Just detach. But Paul says, no. Death isn't natural. You hate death rightly because you were not made for death.

See, the Christian story, it makes sense both of death and of our hatred of death. And it all began with the choice between contentment and discontent.

See, we hate death and the scarcity that leads to it because that was not the world God intended us to live in. Adam and Eve were created in a lush garden with a gazillion opportunities to say yes.

And only one no in the whole of creation. There was scarcely any reason for discontent. And yet we believe the lie that true contentment could be had outside of God's plan.

The lie that God was keeping something from us. The lie that we should be discontent with our relationship and with our status, with God as His image bearers. And so out of discontent, humanity disobeyed, breaking our relationship with the life giver.

[ 17 : 59 ] And we brought death. We brought scarcity into the world. We stole glory from God and we ascribed it to ourselves. And the world has never been the same ever since. To dust we now return. And in the meantime, we sweat to make our bread out of a broken and cursed ground that no longer yields out of abundance, but yields in scarcity.

So of course we are discontent. Not because the world was made that way, but because we made the world that way. A discontented place of scarcity and death.

This is why contentment is such a secret. Particularly for those living unaware of the story of the Scriptures. We were made to be content. But this broken world is full of legitimate reasons for our discontent.

So we're confused about how to be content in this world that's gone wrong. But the thing is, many of us, many of us don't think that contentment is a secret. We think contentment comes from filling in the blank.

If only, fill in the blank. If I only had this or that, then I'd be content. And honestly, a lot of us, most of us, probably live a whole lifetime believing and pursuing this if-only myth.

[ 19 : 11 ] But who of us has ever had enough? Who of us is ever truly satisfied? Like Rockefeller when he was asked, Hey Rockefeller, how much money is enough?

Right? He answered, Just a little bit more. We're all insatiable. And you know, this isn't just about money. This is why we scroll endlessly on our phones.

Swiping, tapping, consuming. Because maybe the next post, the next video, the next like is going to scratch that itch. It's why our closets, our garages, our storage containers are full and we continue to shop. It's why we can't sit in silence for more than a few seconds without reaching for a screen because the quiet exposes the hunger we'd rather not face.

We live in a culture that runs on discontent. Entire industries make trillions convincing us that we are not enough and that what we have is not enough. And so we believe the if-only myth.

If only I had that job. If only I had that relationship. If only I had that home, that experience, that knowledge, that influence, that acceptance. Then, then I'd be content. Then I'd be happy.

[ 20 : 19 ] But we're still restless. Always reaching. Always hitting refresh. Always seeking just a little bit more. And this is exactly why Paul says that he learned, he learned the secret of being content.

Contentment is something that needs to be learned. Whether in the school of plenty or in the school of wants. When you lose the dream or when you actually get the dream. These are two ways God actually graciously teaches us contentment.

Like when we hit rock bottom and we realize that this world is harsh and unforgiving. And that there is no such thing as perfect circumstances. And our dream is crushed. And it can never come true. Or like when we do make it to the top of our little tiny mountaintops.

Only to find there are still bigger mountains to climb. Or like when we get the thing we thought would finally make us happy. Only to realize that it wasn't actually that great. Or maybe it is that great but we realize that we can lose it.

And that it won't last forever. Through plenty and want God graciously teaches us the secret of contentment. That contentment will not and cannot come from positive circumstances.

[ 21 : 24 ] But only through Christ who gives us strength. What does that even mean? What does that actually even mean? What kind of strength? If this is not about winning football games and surviving finals week and landing your dream job.

How do we receive strength from Christ to face anything and be content? Well it's like this tree image that we keep returning to as a church.

Imagine a tree in a storm. The wind is fierce. The rain is pounding. Branches are whipping. Some trees do topple because their roots are shallow. But a tree with deep roots.

It might bend. Its branches might snap off. It might lose all its leaves. But it will not break. It will not bow. Why? Because its strength doesn't come from the storm stopping.

It comes from being rooted in something stronger than the storm. That's what Paul is saying. Christian strength isn't circumstantial. It's rooted. It comes from our rooted union with Christ.

[ 22 : 22 ] So that when drought comes or the winds howl or the earth quakes. You're held fast because your roots go deeper than the disasters. See Paul isn't talking about a motivational slogan. He's talking about a supernatural reality. When Christ dwells within us by his spirit. He reminds us and he assures us that his promises are true.

You are held fast in his word. I will never leave you nor forsake you. When you're being rolled into the OR. You know I am not alone.

When you're standing at a graveside. You know death does not win. Whenever the rejection letter, the diagnosis, the heartbreak comes. You can say with hope this might be part of my story. But this isn't the end of my story. Because if you are in Christ you're a new creation. Your inheritance is imperishable. Your future glory is secure. And nothing, not even death or life or anything else in all creation.

[ 23 : 22 ] Can separate you from the love and life of God. And you can know this because you've already seen the pattern. You've seen the arc of Jesus' life. And sure it goes through suffering and humiliation.

But it ends in redemption, resurrection and exaltation. If you belong to him. His story is now your story. So yes, you can face anything.

Not because you are strong. But because Christ's resurrection strength is in you. And when this strength takes root, it doesn't just hold you fast and steady.

It overflows. It frees your hands. It loosens your grips. It turns anxious hoarders into open-handed people of joyful generosity. That's exactly what Paul sees in the Philippians.

Look at verse 14. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. The key word here is share. Sug koinuneo. Sug meaning with. Koinuneo. Fellowship. In other words, you didn't just send me money.

[ 24 : 18 ] You entered my life. You entered into fellowship with me. You sat with me in my suffering. You climbed into the pit with me. Paul's saying, you didn't treat me like a charity case. You treated me like family.

That's what generosity does. It doesn't, it's not transactional. It's participation. It's fellowship. It's saying, your need is my need. Your mission is my mission. Your trouble is my trouble. When we give for the sake of the gospel, we're not just writing our names on checks.

We're writing our names into the stories of the people we love. We're saying, I'm with you. I believe in what God is doing through you. I want in on this. So the Philippians weren't just supporters of Paul's ministry.

They were partners in Paul's suffering and joy. Every time they gave, they were tying their story to his. They were saying, Paul, you're not out there alone. We are with you. We are carrying this burden together.

That's what generosity is. It's fellowship expressed in dollars and cents. It's love that moves from sentiment to sacrifice. And that's why Paul is so moved by their gift.

[ 25 : 20 ] Because to him, this isn't about money. It's about relationship. But notice what Paul says in the next verse, in verse 17.

Not that I desire your gifts. What I desire is that more be credited to your account. He's saying, look, I'm not sitting here thinking, wow, I love you guys because you sent me money. No. What I really want is for you to grow rich, not in my bank account, but in yours.

Not earthly rich, but eternally rich. He wants spiritual compound interest for the church in Philippi. Paul's talking about storing up treasure in heaven. He's saying, I want you to invest in something that will never crash, never devalue, never get lost or stolen.

Better than Bitcoin. It will never fade, right? You know how some of us, you know, we check our investment portfolios and we wonder, am I diversified enough? Will I have enough in 30 years? Will this hold its value? Will this hold its value? Paul's like, what if you could invest in something that would pay eternal dividends? What if there was a stock that could never lose value and would only appreciate forever?

[ 26 : 26 ] Because that's what you're doing when you live open-handed and generous for the sake of the gospel. When you give for the sake of Christ, you're not throwing money away.

You're transferring it into an account that never runs dry. Like, what if we thought about every act of generosity as a deposit into an unshakable kingdom? I try to practice this myself every time I, I actually don't set my giving on auto-pay to the charities I support, to this church that I give to.

I do it every single month. I put it into my calendar as a task and I do it. And as I do it, I let myself listen in my head to this little do-do-do-do-do sound. Like it's a video game. I try to gamify it, right? Because I try to make it seem like this is an investment in the future and we are leveling up together, right? Every dollar you give toward gospel work, every hour you serve in Christ's name, every resource you leverage for eternal purpose, it will be credited.

It is credited to your account in heaven. And I can't tell you what that's going to look like. But are you willing to be pleasantly surprised at the end of the age? So Paul frames their generosity as loving fellowship, as a zero-risk, high-reward investment.

[ 27 : 43 ] But also here in verse 18, he also frames it simply as beautiful, fragrant worship unto God. I have received full payment, 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. He's saying, know that I have more than enough, especially since you sent that gift through Epaphroditus with that generous gift, right? But it's not just a practical gift for me.

What you've done is a beautiful act of worship, a fragrant offering that is pleasing to the Lord, that is worthy of the Lord. This isn't just charity.

It isn't just an unfortunate worldly activity that we need to engage in so that me and Jonathan can feed our families, right? Or our missionaries can go off and live abroad. When we are generous toward the Lord, even before we are loving our neighbors, we are worshiping the Lord our God. We are loving Him. And remember, we are only ever giving God what is already His. We can't out-give God. We can never out-give God. And that's what Paul says here in verse 19.

[ 28 : 50 ] And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Notice Paul doesn't say God will meet your needs out of His riches as if He dipped into a limited bank account, right?

He's saying according to His riches, which are infinite. Christ is risen in glory. His inheritance is everlasting, imperishable, unquantifiable. And thus, God isn't stingy with His people.

He doesn't give what's left over. He gives according to His riches in Christ. God gives us Himself. And all that is His, He gives it to us. And He wants us to love.

And He wants us to continue to lavish these gifts on others as He lavishes them upon us. And to further the reach of His good news. And to see all the fruit that this good news can bear in the world.

And man, if we believe this, this should change everything for us. Because if it's true, if we have an inexhaustible supply in Christ, and if God actively desires to give to us and to make us a blessing, then we can say goodbye to our scarcity mentalities and the restless, tight-fisted, always looking over our shoulder, always competing with everybody else, always feeling like we need to sweat and hustle to delay death way of life.

[ 30 : 15 ] We don't need to delay death. We don't need to prolong our lives. In fact, our Savior did the opposite. And He did it out of love for us.

And in this risen and exalted Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, we can live open-handed like Him. And we can give in radical ways that no one else in the world can match or even comprehend.

And we can be confident that God will bless and multiply our investments for the good of His world. Look at what it says in verse 22. All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

Again, the Philippians weren't just an income source to Paul. Their gifts were literally transforming lives for the glory of God at the very heart of the Roman Empire. Even people in the very household of Caesar were being reached and won to Christ.

The kingdom of God was advancing. In the midst of the seemingly unstoppable empire, the kingdom of God was advancing through this itty-bitty, under-resourced, early church's grace-inspired, joyful generosity.

[ 31 : 26 ] And this is the power of the grace of God. This is what grace does. This is what makes us different from everybody else. Grace frees you. Grace takes anxious hoarders and turns them into joyful givers.

The grace of Christ. God's riches at Christ's expense. G-R-A-C-E. Think about that. The greatest act of generosity in history is the gospel itself.

That the bread of life has been broken for us and is therefore the guarantee of our daily bread. So why withhold the joy of generosity from ourselves and from the world?

What reason do we have to be discontent? The son of God who left heaven's glory embraced poverty and died in shame. He gave it all and yet still rose again so that we could share in his glory and never lack.

Though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor so that we by his poverty might become rich. If you are in Christ, you are rich. You are rich. You have no idea.

[ 32 : 32 ] We can give because he first gave to us. And when you understand that you've received such infinite grace, generosity stops being a duty and it starts being a delight.

So here's the question for us this week. What am I withholding out of fear? Withholding from my neighbor? Withholding from the Lord?

What am I withholding out of fear? And where do I need to trust the Lord more? Your homework is to name it and to bring it to God and then take that next step of generosity.

Financial, relational, with your time. We're going to hear about an opportunity to do that with your time from Pastor Ray. He pastors in Hayward. We love this church. We want to partner with this church just as the Philippians partnered with the Corinthians and the Thessalonians.

We want to make this a beautiful thing of fellowship. Generosity of our time. What is that next step for you? It's going to make you a little bit uncomfortable. And not because you got to but because you get to.

[ 33 : 32 ] Because your father owns the storehouses of heaven and he has promised, my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus. So that's the word for us this morning.

Believe and receive this word from God. Paul's blessing at the end of this letter. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. That grace, God's riches at Christ's expense, is your security, your strength, your supply.

Let it be your celebration. Embrace that grace. Let it shape you into a person who is content in every circumstances and therefore overflowing with generosity. Walk in the abundance of the king and show the world by your peace and by your joy and by your radical generosity.

That Jesus plus nothing truly equals everything. Let's pray. Oh Lord, who could do justice to the richness of this text, this passage of scripture?

Who could do justice to the richness of what you offer us in Christ? Oh Lord, shape us. Make Paul's heart and declaration our own.

[ 34 : 51 ] That whatever gain we have, we consider as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, we count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

Oh God, make that the heartbeat of Christ's church. Let us be able to say that we have suffered the loss of all things for the sake of Christ.

We consider them rubbish. Lift him up in our eyes. Lift him up in our hearts, oh Lord. Convince us that he is enough.

And that we are rich beyond all imagination. In his name we pray. Amen.