

Philippians: The Book of Joy (Phil. 4:10-23)

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[0 : 00] Okay, well let's bring it back. We'll see.

I don't know if this is going to work or not. but regardless, let me pray for us. Go ahead, if you have a copy of the scriptures, turn open to the very last chapter of Philippians.

We're going to finish our study this morning. The Book of Joy. And we'll be looking at Philippians 4, verses 10 through the end, through 23. And then we'll be done.

So let me pray for us. Father, we come before you this morning. And Lord, we are here acknowledging our need for you. Lord, we need your help today.

We need your help this week. And we're thankful that you have not left us here blind. You've given us your spirit. You've given us a new heart. And you've given us your word.

[0 : 57] And Lord, we love that the law of the Lord, it's perfect. And it's enough to revive our soul. We know that the testimony of the Lord is sure, able to make wise the simple.

And so, Lord, this morning we commit our time to you. We ask that you would speak to us collectively and individually. Lord, whatever we need this morning, we ask that you would accomplish in us.

Father, you would refresh us and our eyes would gaze back at Jesus and the gospel. We pray all this in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen. Okay. Am I on still?

Wow. You guys were getting me in stereo there for a second. That was pretty cool. Well, as we come to this passage, I was thinking about gift giving.

Growing up, my parents had kind of a principle they wanted to teach their children. And that was to say please and thank you. That's kind of a low bar, parents.

[2 : 01] So, just to get you started. If you're new to this, that's something that you can aim to teach your kids. And we'll kind of grow from there. But my parents often, well, they would actually always have us write these thank you notes.

After a holiday or a birthday. And whether the gift was a delight or whether it was just okay, we always had to write thank you notes.

And sometimes the gift was just okay and the thank you note was a little bit more forced and obligatory. And I was thinking back to Christmas when I received a, from a relative, I was given a Big Bird doll.

I was nine. And I'm a guy. And I received this plushy Big Bird doll.

And I remember having to write a thank you note. And, I mean, what do you say? Right? Thank you for the yellow doll.

[3 : 12] It's a bird. It's great. That was a lie. I use that as just a sort of an analogy as we come to the final section of Philippians.

Because this section really is Paul's thank you note to this church. He ends this letter well.

In fact, I don't believe this was obligatory at all. I think this just poured from his heart. He was delighted to write these words to this church.

And it's a wonderful conclusion to this letter. These words of thanks. So let's just consider it. The whole section together. Let me read what Paul writes to them.

Beginning of verse 10. He says, I rejoice in the Lord greatly. That now at length you have received your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me. But you had no opportunity.

[4 : 11] 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. I know how to abound. In every and every circumstance I have learned the secret of facing plenty.

And hunger, abundance, and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the

gospel when I left Macedonia, no church entered into my partnership.

Entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving. Except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

I have received full payment and more. I am well supplied. I receive from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. A fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus.

[5 : 21] The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you. Especially those of Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

This last section, church. This was very easy for Paul to write.

I think this just poured from his heart as he thought about this church. I can't write. I can't wait to thank them. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. There's great warmth in the way that Paul brings this letter of joy to a close. And I hope that you see, this is perhaps one of the most affectionate instances we see of Paul as he writes to this beloved church.

Paul is touched by this very sincere, this very kind, this very thoughtful church. And mind you, their concern for Paul, it's not simply concern without action.

[6 : 31] They act on their concern by sending this financial care package, if you will, with Epaphroditus.

And recall Epaphroditus, man, he was so anxious to get it there, he risked his life to get it there. We looked at that at the end of chapter 2. Even after 10 years from Paul planting this church on his second journey, they're still providing encouragement to Paul.

Paul, I love this example of a joyful church. A church that was concerned. But it was a church that was willing to move into action.

We sort of live in this day of advocacy. Everybody's an advocate for everything. But how many people act? How many people actually engage and do something? This church was concerned. They were moved. And they engaged. And I think what is sort of astounding related to all the churches that Paul had invested in, they are the only church initially that gets involved.

[7 : 49] In fact, Paul mentions that. He says in verse 14, Hey, it was kind of you to share in my trouble. Paul, and then verse 15, he says, When I left Macedonia, no church entered into my partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only.

And in fact, I believe that Paul is referencing the Philippian church, in particular when he writes to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11.8 when he says, Hey, I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.

I think this Philippian church was so engaged, so invested in Paul's ministry, they continued to financially care for him over the years of his ministry.

Why do you suppose the Philippian church was alone in this? Or perhaps just one of a few? And I would say this.

Because it costs them something. That's why people don't get involved. It's the cost. And this church, this Philippian church, this church filled with joy is a great example to us for it.

[9 : 00] Amen? They were willing to actually do something. They were willing to engage, to get involved. Anytime you get involved, it's going to cost.

Always. Always. If you begin to disciple a new believer, it will cost you. It's disruptive. You will give time, personal time, whatever that is, to be able to build into another believer.

There's a cost. Mentoring. Maybe it's a husband and wife mentoring a younger couple in the faith. Maybe they're new to marriage. There's a cost. We're going to allocate hours in our day, our week, our time, prepare some, get together.

There's a cost. Financially contributing to the needs of someone else. Taking time to pray with someone, to see them and to listen.

There's a cost. Taking time to care for another. Maybe perhaps even physically. There's a cost. And this church was willing to enter in, into Paul's life and ministry.

[10 : 17] They were willing to enter in and allow their lives to be somewhat disrupted. And as a result, Paul was hugely blessed. He was hugely blessed.

And that's actually, church, the calling of our lives, right? That we would be others-oriented individuals. That we would live, right? To minister. And that's, I think, actually the secret of joy. Right? It's that the secret of joy is that my life isn't about me. They were willing to enter in. And Paul's appreciative. So much affection for this church. And I think there's a lesson, right? For our body, for us as individuals, don't let the cost, don't let the inconvenience keep you sidelined from ministry.

Don't do that. Life is too short. Last weekend, I just got done doing a memorial for a dear, beloved sister in Christ, my friend Carla Cowan.

[11 : 23] And it was wonderful to do because she lived a very good life. Her life was not about her. Her life was devoted to ministry. To pouring into others. To serving.

And it's like, life's too short. We're never going to get to heaven and meet the Lord and go, man, I wish I would have given you a little bit less. That conversation just, it's never going to happen. And this church is a testimony to us. Life is too short not to be engaged in the mission of God, church. To be generous with our time, talent, treasure.

A few years back, I read an article out of the Seattle PI. I know it's the evil paper on the other side of the mountains, but bear with me.

And I was struck by the title of this article. It was entitled, One Man Employment Bureau. And I don't know if this man loved Jesus, but he sure acts like it.

[12 : 25] And it was convicting. And this is how the article, a portion of it reads. It says, somewhere on the road between Palm Springs and Bellevue, Larry H. up and quit.

He had taken two months off from his job at the Costco in Issaquah and headed to California with his wife, Mary Lou. She had just retired after 40 years of teaching and wanted to be away when the new school year had started without her.

But as they drove back home last month, Larry realized that the guy who had been filling in for him, driving over Snoqualmie Pass from Cleelum to pump gas at Costco, would be out of a job.

I'm taking someone's hours, Larry thought to himself. So he and Mary Lou talked it over. Quitting would mean that Larry would lose his health insurance, his dental and vision coverage, the meat and potatoes and pie with ice cream of the American life.

But it would also mean that someone else could have a livelihood, feed his family, and survive. I thought, you know what? We can manage.

[13 : 31] And so Larry, at 65 years old, told me, with the economy, what it is, with what it is, I wanted someone else to have a chance.

And so he figured, you know what? He would quit, give this other guy his job, and he'd begin to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. What a great story. What a great example.

Church, as followers of Christ, are we willing to sacrifice anything? We've been given so much time, talent, treasure. Will we use any of that to minister to another on behalf of the Lord?

And recall what Paul says. Here it is. The secret of joy. Philippians 1.21. To live is Christ. Christ. That's the equation. Well, as I reflect on this passage, church, this really, this ending of it's a thank you, it's gratitude.

Paul's just so thankful. But there's a portion of this section that just sort of jumped out at me this week, and I'd like to sort of focus the remainder of our time this morning on, actually, it's a bit of an aside that Paul makes in the course of saying thank you.

[14 : 48] And I think it's as timely a message as there is. And so for sake of conciseness, brevity this morning, we're going to just close our time by looking at just three verses in particular.

Okay? And it's a familiar section, but I want to talk about it this morning. So let's look at verses 11 to 13. Let me remind us what Paul writes here. He says, Now, I believe that Paul writes this, this sort of parenthetical thought, to be clear to the Philippians as he's writing to them, as he's thanking them, Hey, I'm not hinting for more money.

He wants to be clear on that. In fact, he says that at the beginning of the section. He says, Hey, not that I'm speaking of being in need. I'm not being subtle.

I'm not trying to, like, hope that you're going to give me a little more. He's like, I'm good. I'm good. Paul is content.

The gift that he received, man, he's greatly appreciated. It's a huge blessing to him. But whether the gift was given or not, it's well with Paul's soul.

[16:20] And he says here, Hey, I'm content. Content. What does this word mean? Content. Content. Well, in Paul's day, this is a word used by the Stoic philosophers.

And if you translate it, the translation would essentially be self-sufficient. Self-sufficient. My joy is independent.

My contentment. My contentment is independent. It's not beholden to my circumstances. It doesn't matter who's in the office.

I'm content. It doesn't matter if the person I was interested in reciprocates and notices me. Unless you're married to them.

That's a whole different thing. I got the raise. I got the promotion. Oh, I'm content.

[17:28] I made the sale. I'm content. It's the season I love. The sports season. The golfing season. The gardening season.

Oh, it's content. I'm good. No, no. Contentment's independent. That's where this idea of self-sufficient comes from. But unlike the Stoics, where they thought, man, contentment, it's derived from them personally.

That's the resource. For Paul, he's saying, no, the resource, it doesn't come from within me. It comes from someone else. From the one that never changes. I.e., verse 13, where it says, hey, it comes what?

Through him. It is well with Paul's soul, regardless of circumstance, because, not because Paul's such a great guy.

No, because his life is hidden in Christ. See, the gospel has liberated him from lesser joys to fill his soul. You ever experience that?

[18:35] It's liberating. It's freeing. That deep peace, regardless of what season you happen to be in, whether it's a season of laughter or maybe grieving.

Deep sorrow. Have you felt that peace, whether you're in a season of plenty or maybe a season of want? Because that's what Paul was experiencing.

He truly was content. And I think we could read this passage and maybe we could be a little cynical and think, well, you know, Paul, it's because he had already, like, accomplished some really incredible things.

So he's feeling good. Right? He did stuff. He reached a level of success. He doesn't desire more. Last weekend, we were on the west side for the memorial service of our friend, and it was shocking, the affluence.

It kind of, like, whoo, just, like, slaps you when you haven't been there for, you know, a few years. You don't see it until you walk away from it. And then you, like, you arrive in Issaquah and all of a sudden it's like, whoa, you know.

[19:55] I mean, I even had, like, a, you know, Samara was counting the Teslas, like, I think within the first 30 seconds she's like, dad, we're at 100. Do cyber trucks count as two? You know what I mean? It's just like, and it's not a political statement.

It's just like you have to have some resources to be able to afford nice, you know, vehicles. And it was just like, wow. You kind of get blind to it. And you can kind of feel that way as we listen to Paul, right?

Or you look at others like, well, of course, they're content. They have stuff. They don't live in the same conditions as I do. They don't have the same trials as I do.

They're not in a constant state of just the unknown, like me. If I had that house, that vehicle, that position, that whatever, I wouldn't be so anxious.

I could be content. And yet Paul here says something just phenomenal. He says, hey, I've learned contentment. I've learned it.

[20:59] And what Paul is alluding to, what he's telling us is, hey, life has not been easy. Consider what he says, verse 12. I know how to be brought low.

I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I've learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. And we can just, and we did a few weeks back, looked at a portion of his biography in 2 Corinthians 11.

I mean, Paul experienced things that we will never experience in this life. Three times, he says, I was beaten with rods in 2 Corinthians 11, 25.

Once I was stoned. And not to mention the five scourges that he experienced. Church, people have never thrown stones, rocks at me, seeking to extinguish my life.

I've never experienced that. And yet Paul's writing here, I'm content. Despite that. Despite the difficult reality of my life.

[22 : 05] I know heartache. I know disappointment. I know disappointment. Paul would have been content in Rome, home arrest, chained to a soldier, even without the gift that the Philippian church gave.

Even without the visit that Epaphroditus made to him to bring encouragement. I still would have been, it still would have been well with my soul, despite the circumstance.

Certainly there was great encouragement that came from the gift, from the visit. But he would have been content even without. And it's interesting because Paul talks about, I could be content on either end of the spectrum.

And I get it. Well, I don't have a lot. I'll, I'll be, God, I'll be content with a lot. I don't have a lot. But we're not even going to get into that.

He's like, you know what, both ends of the spectrum. I can be content with plenty. I can be content with little. And I think Paul had learned the secret of how to avoid pride.

[23 : 23] Kind of, which is an artificial solace. It's its own little kind of deformed form of peace, right? He was able to avoid the pride that came from both positions.

Because there's arrogance that can come with being rich. I have more than you. I am somehow better than you. But you have never thought that.

Well, wealth comes in many forms. I have a better, I'm wealthier. I possess more. I have a higher IQ.

I have a better family. I have better looks. Me and Scott struggle with that all the time.

It's a real thing. For some of us beautiful pastors out there. You ever felt that, right?

[24 : 24] To be proud, even when wealth is merely more than someone else with similar, meager means, that's actually how me and Scott struggle.

I'm a better, average-looking guy than you, right? Right? finding solace, contentment through comparison.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who, a Russian author, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970, he wrote a smaller book that isn't as widely known, but called A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. And it's this account of life in a Stalinist labor camp in Siberia in the 1950s. And the main character, Solzhenitsyn writes, is a guy by the name of Shukov. I don't know if I said that right, Mark, just correct me later.

But he's the novel's protagonist. And the book follows his daily struggle just of this average man in this labor camp, this gulag.

[25 : 33] And he writes this, the protagonist. He says, he took a deep drag on his cigarette, describing, the author's describing the main character here.

He took a deep drag on his cigarette, savoring it. It wasn't just the tobacco. It was the sense of having something that others did not.

Interesting. There's another account of him taking pride that he had his own spoon, while other inmates did not.

I've never been proud for having my own spoon. But it's like, I have something just a little bit more than you. And I'm going to draw some solace, some peace, some contentment from that.

Is our contentment tied to being a little bit ahead of the next guy? That's rhetorical. Don't respond out loud.

[26 : 35] But I think it's insidious. It's subtle. It's a trap of the enemy. Now, equally, we can struggle with actually the arrogance that can come from living without, on the other side of the spectrum.

While others are not. Right? I've suffered more than you. I am now somehow better than you. As I said last weekend, as we went to the west side, it was a little bit of the twilight zone for me, because if I were to be honest with you, there was probably a day, I'm sure, when I lived in a very affluent west side and thought that society was better for maybe being in a decently large, thriving city.

Right? Well, somehow, we're better than those backward 509ers. I'm sure there was a day. I don't think it was that deep, but I'm sure.

Right? And why it was a little bit of the twilight zone last weekend is because I was actually struggling with the opposite thought as we drove into this affluence, and I'm like, man, I don't want anything to do with this.

Like, the people that live, like, I mean, those 509ers, man, they're smart. Those people who live in the country better than these EV car-driving city folks.

[27 : 57] That's wrong. It's pride on both ends. And what crushed my sort of sinful thought was after the service of the funeral, I was able to meet with God's people, and there was such a humility and kindness with God's people.

It was like, I just felt like it was walking into the gathering at 4th. And it was beautiful, and it was sort of confronting some of the things that I had been wrestling with. Church, we have to be careful that we're not trying to siphon joy and contentment out of a martyr's complex.

Amen? Amen? How many want to be content in this life? Don't raise your hand, because I think all your hands will go up. If not, there's something wrong, and you need to meet with a pastor.

Okay? Yeah, you want the joy of contentment. We all do. I don't want to struggle with discontentment. I don't want to get caught up in just a culture constantly telling me not to be content.

And if you didn't know, this is maybe news. Hopefully not. That's the default setting of the world, church. Amen? To not be content. We even know it because of the way that Paul writes here, because he says, you know what, I've learned the what?

[29 : 13] The news that everyone knows? No, he says, I learned the secret. What's a secret? Something that the majority are not aware of. Culture's default setting is restlessness.

Always searching. It's the whole drive behind marketing. Create discontent. You're not pretty enough unless you buy our product. You're not with it, hip, cool, whatever the word is.

So buy our new thing. And this is a new one in our age. Man, you're not of the right political family until you own this or you sell that. That's a new one. Can't keep up.

But if, you know what, you aren't something. There's a void. So you need to add this thing to your life, and if you do, you'll be content. And yet Paul says, wait a second, I know how to do it.

I can live this way. How does he do it? Is Paul just mentally tougher than us? Is he just used to living with less? No. Here's the secret, and he tells us in verse 13.

[30 : 14] Here's the secret. He says this. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. That's the secret. Oh, boy.

Is there ever a verse taken out of context? What does this mean? I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Okay. What this verse is not saying, it's not saying, man, I can just do anything with God's power.

This is a highly abused verse. Professional athletes, scrawl it on. They tattoo it and put it on their sneakers. It's everywhere. I can do all things.

I can do all things. There's actually a limit. Maybe this is the bad news, and parents, hopefully you've been raising your kids well, but there's news here. You can't do everything.

We simply can't do all things because of Jesus. Well, I got Jesus. I can fly. No, you can't. Well, I got Jesus. I can grow five more inches.

[31 : 24] Play in the NBA. Maybe I need a foot. Maybe I need two. No, you can't. Well, I got Jesus, man. I think I can breathe underwater. You know, I think actually this verse, I think the enemy has used it, used it as an excuse for people to walk away from the faith.

And I think there are some that have read this, and they're like, wait a second, God's word, it lies. God's a liar. I'm out. Because they're like, I'm not. I can't do anything.

And so when we come to this verse, the key to interpreting God's word, the word that we talk about a lot, Scott says it all the time, context.

Context. What is the context here? What are the all things? What are the all things? This is not all inclusive. What are the all things that Paul's talking about? What is he talking about here in this section?

The context is what? Contentment. You can live with much. You can live with little. And yet you can still experience joy in both.

[32 : 42] It's possible. Yeah. You've been forgiven for real. What problems do we have? We're clean before holy God?

We possess God's spirit just like Paul? We can center our lives on Christ just like Paul? Maybe the problem for those in Christ is that we want contentment, but our lives really are centered on everything but Jesus.

Maybe that's the issue. I think it's basic. I think that should be plain. Church, every time my eyes are directed away from Christ and I begin the comparison thing and I look to circumstance, I look to things, I look to other people, and not to Jesus, I lose joy that comes with being content.

My house. My house. Things are breaking. I'm not content. I want a different house. I want a better house. My income.

It could be here, but it's not. It's there. It's, oh, I'd be content if I just had this much more. I look at my coworkers and maybe they're more gifted or they're this or they're that.

[34 : 04] Oh, they get recognized and I don't. People appreciate them, but not me. I'm not content anymore. We look at friends and possessions and, oh, they went on, this spring break, they went on vacation.

I didn't. We went to Chawila. Boo-hoo for us. Right? And then we're suffering.

Church, I don't think scrolling Instagram has ever led to greater contentment in anyone's life. If I'm wrong, you can correct me. Tell me later offline. If you're like, man, I am a more content person, Jay, and Instagram is the means, like, that would be unusual.

Let me end our time by giving us three truths to kind of, of a life centered on Christ that I think will help provoke some of this contentment that Paul talks about. Okay? And he alludes to these things in the few of the remaining verses.

I'm just going to pick a few, see if we can gain something from them. Three truths to help us in our fight for contentment.

[35 : 14] First one comes from verse 18. He writes, I have received full payment and more. I'm well supplied. I have received from Epaphroditus the gift you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

First thing to help us in our battle of unrest is what? Embody a spirit of gratitude. Give thanks often. Give thanks often. And that's what Paul is doing here. I'm supplied. I received the gift. This is a thank you. That's the spirit of this entire end section. Paul models that, right?

Give thanks often. Thank others like Paul does in this final section. And thank Jesus. Church, it's very hard to maintain a posture of gratitude and a posture of discontentment at the same time. You're struggling? Give thanks. When our family went through kind of my health crisis a decade ago, one of the things that we were doing often was like, all right, 10 things.

[36 : 19] Let's begin the day. 10 things. Lord, what can I give you thanks for? We still do this with our kids? And sometimes it's just like, I'm thankful for birds. For blue birds and for black birds.

I mean, you know, but we're growing some momentum here, guys. Right? God, what can I give you thanks for today? I think there's new mercies every day.

Lord. And I think that is helping us in this battle. I love the scene at the end of It's a Wonderful Life with George Bailey who just struggles the whole film. Just, I can't get out of town.

My life's a wreck. No one appreciates. Nobody sees what I do. And then it's just all of a sudden there's just like, you see, like, he's running through town.

Thankful to be alive. It's not. No reason to complain. I just have breath. Like, I'm thankful for the bank commissioner and the sheriff.

[37 : 19] Hey, the warrant for my arrest. Woo-hoo! Drafty house. Mr. Potter. My lifelong nemesis. Who cares?

It's just like, and I think we're swept up. Like, that's what we want. And his perspective, it changed everything. Gratitude fuels contentment.

Gratitude. But, Jay, there's some hard things. Yes, we give thanks in those two. The best we can. Oh. Was it Corrie Ten Boone that was like, I'm not going to give thanks for the lice?

Yes. And then, and her sister Bessie was like, no, you give thanks to the Lord for the lice. I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to do it. And then she came to the place where she realized the lice, they kept all the guards out so they could do Bible study.

And she was like, okay, fine. In our family, we practice thankfulness pie. You can do whatever you want, but we have, we have had, yes, we've had many pies.

[38 : 25] Stop. The point is this. We have pie and we give thanks when there are doors that open and when there are doors that close. Give thanks.

Second thing we can do, look at verse 19. Paul writes, and my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. I love that Paul here is actually speaking back to the Philippians who've been generous with him.

And he's saying, hey, just as you've been generous, like, towards God in serving me, he will reciprocate and take care of you. He will supply every need of yours.

And I'll say the second thing in terms of contentment, give thanks, but resolve to trust God's supply of your needs. Resolve to trust God, whatever that thing is.

And this is a hard one. Because I think we like to complain and grumble and never seek God's face related to our needs. But he will take care of us.

[39 : 32] I love the section in Luke 12 where he writes, Consider the ravens.

They neither sow or reap. They don't have storehouses, barns, yet God feeds them. But how much more value are you of the birds? God takes care of his stuff.

His creation. But he delights to take care of his people. Resolve to trust him. You know, God took care of his ancient people for 40 years as they're wandering the desert. Well, Jay, they were wandering the desert.

They weren't being taken. No, they were being taken care of. See how we can go? It's very easy. Sweep bread in the morning. Meat every night. All the while they complain their lives away.

What a waste. And yet God's provision was right in front of them. His providential hand. It's nowhere more clearly seen than when they cross the Jordan.

[40 : 32] They make their first camp there in Gilgal. They enter the promised land. It says in Joshua 5, verse 10 to 12, it says, While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the 14th day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho.

And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. Catch this.

And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Let that sink in for a moment, church. Can I resolve to trust the Lord in His provision for my life? Those of you waiting for something, perhaps waiting for something big, friends, God's timing is what?

It's perfect. It's perfect. Resolve to trust Him. It's incredible. The manna ceased the day after the food was ready for them because of the land.

[41 : 58] Well, finally, and I would say ultimately at the center of contentment, it's found in really the final verse of this letter. And Paul writes in verse 23, he says this, The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

There it is. It's actually how he opened this letter because he says in verse 2, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul actually begins this letter and ends this letter the same way, talking about the grace of Jesus and ultimately the secret, the secret of joy, the secret of contentment.

It's what? It's remembering the gospel, church. Grace to you. Grace. It's remembering the gospel actually is our true story.

It's who we are. It's our new narrative. We've been forgiven of much. That's who we are. We're God's people. His sons, His daughters. The apple of His eye.

Regardless of how your story began, in Jesus, this is no longer who you are. Joy. Contentment.

[43 : 16] Grace to you. Remember Philippians. You want to walk content? Remember who you are. And I love that in this letter it's Epaphroditus, who is the one that ministers to Paul from this church.

I'm going to bring the care package. I'm going to bring the letter back to you. And Epaphroditus, what kind of a name is that, by the way? And it's actually more insidious than you think because Epaphroditus, his parents were idol worshipers because it's a Greek name.

And it actually means belonging to Aphrodite. The goddess of sex and sensuality, beauty. That's his name. Belonging to Aphrodite.

And yet because of the gospel, Epaphroditus no longer belonged to Aphrodite. Amen? He belonged to Christ. He belonged to Jesus.

The gospel's his true story now. Church, the gospel is for us first. For our soul, that is well with our soul.

[44 : 20] I know who I am. I know who you are. Accepted. Clean. Delighted in. Based upon nothing that I brought to Christ other than my sin.

Other than my sin. Church, when God comes to audit our lives, what is he going to find?

He's going to find the blood of Christ covering every sin receipt, every towel. So sweet. The gospel. It's the gospel. It's for you first. It's for me first. You know, we're going to celebrate communion in just a moment. To remind us, this is your story. So would you walk content today? You've been forgiven of much. You have so much to celebrate. You've been forgiven, not just for today, not just for this week. You've been forgiven. [45 : 26] Mind you, you didn't earn this, but you're forgiven forever. We are the prodigal, every one of us. And our joy, our contentment, it flourishes as we remember who our Father is.

Just like the prodigal. That he's kind. That he died on our behalf in the person of Christ. And that, yeah, yeah, he has set a table for us even while we were wallowing in the pigsty church. The table is set. The Father is kind. Amen? Then it can be well with our soul today. Father, thank you for this letter, Lord, that we have spent the last few months in.

Lord, I pray that we would take the lessons that we have received, that we would believe that yes, indeed, your word, your word is perfect. That your word actually does revive the soul.

It does make wise the simple. Lord, that our hearts can rejoice because we know what's true.

You've said it. Lord, I pray that we would be people that would give thanks often.

[46 : 46] Lord, I know there's even a benefit as we grow in gratitude. We actually become more attractive as people. I think our ministry increases. We actually gain friends because we're not complaining.

Convict us. Let us repent. And let us begin to walk in a posture of gratitude today and this week.

And Lord, help us to be able to trust you.

We have trusted you for eternity. I think we can trust you for today. And ultimately, would you remind us, would you refresh us with the fact that we are forgiven people? And Lord, might that stir us to want to live these lives of worship unto you.

Not to go back to a narrative that is not our own. For we are new and we're becoming new. We pray all these things in your wonderful name, Jesus, and all God's people said.

Amen. Amen. Amen.